Proba the Prophet

THE CHRISTIAN VIRGILIAN CENTO OF FALTONIA BETITIA PROBA

SIGRID SCHOTTENIUS CULLHED

MNEMOSYNE SUPPLEMENTS LATE ANTIQUE LITERATURE

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The Christian Virgilian Cento of Faltonia Betitia Proba

By

Sigrid Schottenius Cullhed

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To Eric

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Introduction

> Ashore there, when you reach the town of Cumae,
> Avernus' murmuring forests, haunted lakes,
> You'll see a spellbound prophetess, who sings
> In her deep cave of destinies, confiding
> Symbols and words to leaves. Whatever verse
> She writes, the virgin puts each leaf in order
> Back in the cave; unshuffled they remain;
> But when a faint breeze through a door ajar
> Comes to stir and scatter the light leaves,
> She never cares to catch them as they flutter
> Or to restore them, or to join the verses;
> Visitors, unenlightened, turn away
> And hate the Sibyl's shrine.
>
> *Aeneid* 3.443–452, transl. FITZGERALD 1983, 81

∴

In the mid-fourth century, the Roman author Faltonia Betitia Proba wrote a poem in which she narrated key episodes of the Christian story of redemption entirely by recycling Virgilian verses. The work is a *cento*, which refers to the method of composition by which sentences and phrases are extracted from one or several texts and then put together in order to form a new text with a different meaning. We find passages written in a cento-like manner already in Old Comedy,[1] but it is not until the third and fourth centuries CE that we find freestanding centos, such as Hosidius Geta's *Medea*, a Virgilian centonization of the famous tragedy, and Ausonius' *Nuptial Cento*. This development coincides with the transition in writing media from scroll to codex,[2] and it is not difficult

1 See especially Ar. *Ran*. 1264–1268, 1285–1295 and 1309–1322 (by Euripides) and *Pax* 1089–1093, 1270–1274, 1282–1287 and 1286–1287 (by Homer); cf. Stemplinger 1912, 194–195; Bažil 2009, 50, n. 29; Rondholz 2012, 4–5.

2 Reynolds and Wilson 2013 (1968), 35: "The codex did not come into use for pagan literature until the second century; but it rapidly gained ground in the third, and triumphed in the fourth. […] The advantages of the codex over the roll were many: it was handier, more

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to see the similarities between centos and the practice of frequent quotations of the Bible in patristic literature, which was supported by the new material conditions.

The basic signification of the Latin word *cento* was 'patchwork quilt', but already in the second century BCE the Roman comedian Plautus made use of it metaphorically in the phrase *centones sarcire*, "make up stories".[3] The earliest use of the word designating a poetic composition is found in Tertullian (c. 160–220), who refers to Hosidius Geta's poem and authors of Homeric centos, "who stitch together (*sarciunt*) works of their own from the poems of Homer in a patchwork fashion (*more centonario*), uniting various scraps from here and there into one body".[4] These works are mentioned in order to illustrate the problem with certain biblical exegetes who Tertullian accuses of dishonestly reorganizing scriptural passages. Although there is no explicit critique of cento writing in itself, it would obviously be problematic if applied to the biblical texts.

Irenaeus (2nd century CE) similarly criticizes the selective exegesis of the Gnostics by comparing it to Homeric centos. Such compositions could trick the less learned to believe that Homer composed his verses on the subject-matter (ὑπόθεσις) that had actually been introduced by the centonist, and to prove his point, he quotes a ten verses long Homeric cento on Eurystheus sending Hercules to liberate Cerberus from Pluto.[5]

The decontextualizing mode of reading the Scriptures that these fathers rejected was certainly applied to the pagan poets. In the third century, Minucius Felix ascribed awareness of Judeo-Christian doctrine to the Virgilian epics and pointed to the similarity between the account of the creation given by Anchises in the underworld (*A* 6.724–729) and *Genesis*. The opening lines, *Principio caelum ac terras … spiritus intus alit* matched the familiar "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth".[6] Such correspondences were perceived as proof that Virgil possessed a natural knowledge of the Christian God.[7] This is the vein in which Proba's poem was composed: the Virgilian passages men-

capacious, easier to consult, and it may have cost rather less to produce. Reference was made still easier by numbering the pages, and the addition of a list of contents guarded against forged interpolations and other interference with the text."

3 Pl. *Epid.* 455.

4 Tert. *praescr. haer.* 39.4–7: qui de carminibus Homeri propria opera more centonario ex multis hinc inde compositis in unum sarciunt corpus.

5 Iren. *adv. haer.* 1.9.4; cf. 2.1.14.

6 Min. Fel. 19.2

7 Cf. Wiesen 1971; Buchheit 1988; Freund 2000, 135–139.

tioned by Felix are used at the corresponding places in the *Cento*,[8] and the way in which Virgil is re-used follows the same theological and cultural principle. At one and the same time, the *Cento* Christianizes Virgil and Virgilianizes Christianity, or rather it seeks to illustrate that Virgil actually sang about the new religion. In the proem it is explicitly stated: "I will declare that Virgil sang about the pious feats of Christ" (*Vergilium cecinisse loquar pia munera Christi*, 23).[9] Preceded by Juvencus and followed by poets such as Prudentius and Sedulius in the fifth century, Proba stands at the beginning of a classicizing Christian Latin poetic tradition in which the texts of Virgil stand as the fundamental stylistic paradigm and, as such, are constantly legitimized through allegorizing and decontextualizing readings.

The conversion to the new religion of the Roman aristocracy, following that of Constantine in 312, brought with it new challenges to a literary culture characterized by prestige and traditionalism. Among the educated classes the seemingly crude biblical texts, especially in their pre-Jeromian form, did not easily gain authority.[10] As Lactantius (c. 250–325) put it:

> Nam haec in primis causa est cur apud sapientes et doctos et principes huius saeculi scriptura sancta fide careat, quod prophetae communi ac simplici sermone ut ad populum sunt locuti. contemnuntur itaque ab his, qui nihil audire vel legere nisi expolitum ac disertum volunt, nec quidquam haerere animis eorum potest nisi quod aures blandiore sono mulcet; illa vero quae sordida videntur, anilia inepta vulgaria existimantur. adeo nihil verum putant nisi quod auditu suave est, nihil credibile nisi quod potest incutere voluptatem; nemo rem veritate ponderat, sed ornatu.
>
> This is the principal reason why holy scripture lacks the trust of the wise, both scholars and princes of this world: its prophets have spoken to suit ordinary folk, in plain and ordinary language; they thus earn the contempt of people who will not read or hear anything not polished and eloquent. Nothing sticks in such people's minds unless it soothes their ears

8 *Cento* 40–41 ~ *A* 6.728–729; *Cento* 56–57 ~ *A* 6.724–725.

9 Pace Green 1995, 554: "It is not her concern to build bridges on which pagans and Christians may meet, as Minucius Felix tried to do. [...] She is not allegorising Vergil, and nowhere suggests that she has penetrated to a level of meaning which others have missed." For the text and translation of the *Cento*, see the Appendix.

10 Marrou 1938, 473–477; Auksi 1995, 18–24; White 2000, 8; Cameron 2011, 350.

> with its smoothness, and anything seeming coarse they think is stuff for old women, stupid and vulgar. Anything rough on the ears they assume is untrue, and nothing is credible unless it provides aesthetic pleasure; they weigh by garb and not by truth.
>
> Divine Institutes 5.15–18, transl. BOWEN 2003, 283

During this time, a growing demand for biblical texts transposed to a higher stylistic register emerged,[11] and Proba's *Cento* has been regarded as an attempt to meet this need.[12] Thus, we should not look towards the Church fathers with their generally negative attitudes towards centos to understand Proba's project but to Lactantius' theology and its popularity in the contemporary senatorial aristocracy.[13] In the dedicatory epistle to emperor Arcadius (c. 377/78–408), preserved in a few manuscripts, the poem is praised as a work in which one finds "Maro changed for the better" (*Maro mutatus in melius*). The interest taken in centos by his daughter-in-law, empress Eudocia (fl. 5th century), and the later Christian Virgilian centos *On the Incarnation of the Word*, *Verses to the Glory of the Lord* and *On the Church* all bear witness to the position of Proba's *Cento* in the cultural elites of late antiquity.[14]

The concept of writing a patchwork may have had negative undertones for men of the Church, but surely not for all late antique Latin writers. Characterized by episodic and fragmented composition as well as juxtaposition and focus on details, the poetry of this period has often been compared to mosaics or buildings made out of *spolia*.[15] Jean-Louis Charlet exemplifies this kind of composition with Ausonius' *Mosella*, where "epigrammatic medallions are juxtaposed in a series" and the fourth-century poet Claudian's "composition in short

---

11 Herzog 1975, xl; Roberts 1985, 67–70; Evenepoel 1993, 48–51; Margoni-Kögler 2001, 114–116; Cameron 2004, 347–348.

12 Brown 1961, 178; Herzog 1975, 94–95; Kirsch 1989, 136.

13 Cf. Sivan 1993, 150–153; Curran 2012, 329.

14 For the influence of Proba's *Cento* on the later Christian centos, see McGill 2001, 25–26; Giampiccolo 2007, 54; Bažil 2009, 209–218 (See also page p. 60, n. 17).

15 Roberts 1989, 84–85; Shorrock 2011, 132; Agosti 2012, 374–375. See also the critique in Liverani 2011, 41–42: "Whereas *spolia* are materially wrested from a pre-existing context, thereby damaging or even destroying it, the citation replicates an expression (whether it is literary or figural) considered to be authoritative. Not only is the original context of the citation *not* impoverished but, on the contrary, it is raised to classic status and enriched with new resonances. In other words, while it is possible—at least theoretically—to verify a citation or an allusion by comparison with the original text, by definition this cannot be done in the case of the reuse of physical material, as the source simply no longer exists after it has been reused."

set-pieces". A further example is found in Prudentius' *Book in Accordance with the Hours*, in which "Christ's miracles are told in a series of small vignettes in which all the poetic tones are juxtaposed". This structural tendency to produce small independent images coincided with mixing of genres, literary experimentation and transformation of classical models.[16] It is also a time of structural innovation in Latin literature, with shaped poems, acrostics and indeed also centos.[17] In this literary climate, we can imagine the positive force of the patchwork metaphor and the way in which it conceptualizes how each verse and episode in a text assumes its particular meaning in relation to the whole, just like the individual pieces in a patchwork quilt. This is described in Isidore of Seville's (c. 560–636) discussion of the word cento in his *Etymologies*:

> Centones apud grammaticos vocari solent, qui de carminibus Homeri seu Vergilii, ad propria opera more centonario ex multis hinc inde compositis in unum sarciunt corpus, ad facultatem cuiusque materiae.[18]
>
> The grammarians are accustomed to call those poems 'centos' which piece together their own particular work in a patchwork manner from poems of Homer and Vergil, making a single poem out of many scattered passages previously composed, based on the possibilities offered by each source.
>
> Etymologies 1.39.25, transl. BARNEY et al. 2006, 66.

Proba's undertaking harmonizes with the literary form that consists of creating a unity out of scattered pieces. By selecting precious segments from the most appraised Roman author and arranging them in intricate patterns, Proba's textual practice dresses Christianity in costly Virgilian garb and does not let the revered Roman poet go to waste, but incorporates him into the fabric of the new culture.

The text is one of considerable historical and cultural importance. It belongs to the small number of ancient texts with a female author and stands out as one of our earliest extant Christian Latin poems. Above all, its advanced intertextual playfulness, experimental mixing of genres and complex narrative structures makes it an intriguing challenge for literary scholarship. Its place in the

16 Charlet 1988, 76–78, esp. 78.

17 McGill 2012, 336.

18 On resemblances between this passage and Tert. *praescr. haer.* 39.4–7, see Fassina 2007.

tradition is also exceptional: As a systematic act of reception of Virgil and the Bible, it presents us with a conspicuous example of late antique amalgamation of the Judeo-Christian and Greco-Roman exegetical and literary domains. Moreover, its position in the tradition between Virgil and the Bible, between the so-called *poetae minores* and *maiores*, its radical technique of literary imitation and female author-function (a rare thing in this tradition) renders the reception of the *Cento* a rewarding field of study.

This book is divided into two main parts: The first (Chapters 1–3) analyzes the main tendencies in medieval and modern reception of the *Cento*, and the latter (Chapters 4–6) examines the work itself. The first chapter deals with issues of authorship and author biography and how these parameters have evolved in the reception of the poem. Very little is known about the historical person Proba but her identity has often been subject to extensive discussions. During the early modern era, 'Proba' was often represented as a learned and/or divinely inspired author in close spiritual and intellectual contact with Virgil. The general attitude was gradually transformed over the years and in the twentieth century we are instead confronted with a narrative of Proba as a mother, wife and teacher, who piously wrote the *Cento* to inspire her family. In particular, the increasing tendency during the late nineteenth century to condemn the *Cento* as an aesthetically inferior piece of poetry generated an apologetic rhetoric where Proba's devoutness and "desire for social stability"[19] was invoked in order to 'save' her. The second chapter concentrates on these negative attitudes towards the *Cento*. Due to Virgil's position in the canon, Proba became a disrespectful thief who 'stole' from the great poet instead of creating her own verses. Yet, many scholars tend not to confront the *Cento* directly, but invoke a constructed 'early audience', searching through contemporary preserved Latin texts for vague allusions in order to fabricate a pessimistic narrative, according to which 'the early reader' rejected the *Cento*. Her centonic appropriation of Virgil corresponded better to the values of Renaissance humanists who frequently extolled Proba for her ability and inventiveness. The third chapter focuses on these and other positive responses to the poem. By exploring a number of textual testimonies from before the Carolingian age to modernity, the aim is to demonstrate some of the uses and the impact of the *Cento* over the years. Besides examining various codicological contexts in which it is found, there is also a section devoted to the part played by Proba and the *Cento* in the early feminist discourses of the *querelle des femmes*. In the fourth chapter, we enter the second part of the book and turn to textual analysis. Biographical interpre-

19 Curran 2000, 284.

tations based on assumptions about the author's feelings and intentions are problematized and the various textual strategies that characterize the poem are explored in order to arrive at a different reading of the text. The first chapter of this part explores the configurations of the fictive narrator, whose authorial voice is fashioned as that of a prophet and a confessing believer in the preface, interludes and epilogue. In the last two chapters dealing with the Old and New Testament sections of the poem respectively, I focus on the narrative structures and intertextual patterns that serve to unify the individual verses and episodes. The concept of typology is important for these verses and episodes, since it describes the hypertextual connections between the *Cento* and the Virgilian and biblical texts. An appendix offers the Latin text of the *Cento* (based on Karl Schenkl's 1888 edition with a few minor modifications) and references in the margins to the Virgilian and Biblical texts, as well as an English translation.

I do not provide a separate survey of the scholarship on Proba here, since the first part of the book deals with this question more extensively. For comprehensive overviews of the history of centos in general, I refer to the recent studies in McGill (2005) and Bažil (2009). The reception of ancient centos in the early modern era has previously been dealt with in the dissertation of Cazes (1998),[20] and the *Cento* of Proba has recently been published with Italian translation and commentary both by Badini and Rizzi (2011) and Sineri (2011). There are two recent lists of manuscripts containing the *Cento* of Proba, one was published by Cazes (1998), one by Lucarini (2014), who also offers a new stemma based on test collations. The latter appears to be unaware of the former, and a few items should be added to both.[21]

20 Other texts that have been particularly helpful for my work include Herzog 1975; Clark and Hatch 1981; Schnapp 1992; Green 1997; Margoni-Kögler 2001; Margoni-Kögler 2001²; Pollmann 2004; Harich-Schwarzbauer 2009; Formisano and Sogno 2010.

21 To Lucarini's list one should add at least 21 manuscripts: Padova, Biblioteca del Seminario Vescovile, 527, 11th c.; Copenhagen, Royal Library, Gl. kgl. S. 46, 12th c.; Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, 10038–10053 (978), 13th c.; Oxford, St John's College, lat. 98, 13th c.; Weimar, Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek, Q111, 1201–1250; London British Library Harley, 4967, 13th c.; Cambridge, St John's College, D. 22 (97), 14th c.; Copenhagen, Royal Library, NKS 159, 15th c.; Colmar, Bibliothèque Municipale, 293, *a.* 1475; Copenhagen, University Library, E. Donat Var 18, *a.* 1495–1496; Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Magl. vii, 1063, 15th c.; London, British Museum, Harley 1895, 15th c.; London, Lambeth Palace, L O (4, 6), 15th c.; Nuremberg, Stadtbibliothek, Cent. V, App. 16, 15th c.; Siena, Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati, K VI 70, 15th c.; Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Cod. Guelf. 237 Gud. Lat., 15th c.; Zwickau, Rathsschulbibliothek, XIII, II, 5, 15th c.; Freiburg im Breisgau,

Quotations of the *Cento* are always accompanied by references to the Virgilian text, using the abbreviations *A*, *G*, and *E* to indicate the *Aeneid*, *Georgics* and *Eclogues*. When one verse consists of two or more segments from different verses, these are separated by a broken vertical bar (¦).

Theoretical and Methodological Issues

Fundamental to this study is a view of the *Cento* as a culturally advanced literary form, as a space where different traditions, myths, and cultural horizons tend to coexist and reflect each other intertextually. The polysemic potentials of this literary form play out in intricate ways in the text, bringing out affinities and discrepancies between the Judeo-Christian and Greco-Roman mythologies. In this section, I will briefly outline the theoretical foundations of this project through the concepts author, reception, genre and intertextuality. In each section, I will also address the methodological consequences of these ideas and in a final section clarify some terms and concepts that will be used in my analysis of the narrative structure of the poem.

Author

A basic differentiation will be made between three Probae: the historical person who penned the *Cento*, the discursive function we call 'author' and the fictive narrator in the poem. These three domains are obviously reciprocally related and share certain attributes, but there are good reasons to keep them apart.

Due to the fact that we almost entirely lack biographical data for Proba from external sources (see Chapter 1), scholars have often considered finding out more about her life as an important objective when interpreting the text. The narrator's rejection of the epic theme of war has been read as a reference to important events in Proba's life (see chapter 4), and in the representation of Eve, scholars have attempted to trace a fourth-century aristocratic woman's political and social views (see chapter 5). My aim is not to extract such biographical information from the poem. However, in studying the reception of

Universitätsbibliothek Freiburg im Breisgau, 108, 16th c.; Görlitz, Bistumsarchiv, Jauernick, Pfarrbibliothek, nr. 2, 16th c.; Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Cod. Guelf. 284 Gud. Lat., 17th c.; Toulouse, Bibliothèque de Toulouse, 809, 18th c. Note also that the manuscript listed by Lucarini as Chartres, Bibliothèque Municipale 97, 12th c., was destroyed in a fire in 1944.

the *Cento*, the operations of author-biography in literary criticism in general and Classics in particular will be considered. I will also discuss the ideological underpinnings of the various historical constructs of Proba—the teacher, prophet, mother and wife, but almost never the poetic virtuosa.

Following Michel Foucault, by 'author' I refer to the conscious individual that readers tend to perceive as accessible through the text, a discursive function that often seems to be psychologically necessary for historiographical or interpretative interaction with any literary work. This is the Proba whose presumed intentions and technical and intellectual capacity readers of the *Cento* invoke in order to determine the validity of an interpretation. This 'author' will be regarded only as "a projection [...] of the operations that we force texts to undergo",[22] which has certain consequences for the way in which I will present my interpretations of the text (see my view on allusion in the section 'Intertextuality' below). Foucault's main argument, however, centers on the transformations this function undergoes over different historical moments; how attributions and disattributions of works and biographical data, and especially an ever-changing 'ethics of authorship' alter the way in which the author in a given discourse is conceived. Tracing the metamorphoses of this Proba will be an important task here, from the 'author ethics' of the medieval scriptoria through Renaissance culture, the printing press, copyright laws, modernist and post-modernist literary experimentation and the discipline of Classics.

Finally, there is the authorial or poetic persona, the 'I Proba' of the *Cento* (verse 12). This persona will be of interest not only as an expression of a specific 'author ethics' of early Christian Latin epic, but also as a narratological component, 'the narrator'. We will thus repeatedly return to the question: Who is speaking and what is her relationship to another author, Virgil, whose phrases condition her every word?

---

22 Foucault 1969, 85–86: "Mais en fait, ce qui dans l'individu est désigné comme auteur (ou ce qui fait d'un individu un auteur) n'est que la projection, dans des termes toujours plus ou moins psychologisants, du traitement qu'on fait subir aux textes, des rapprochements qu'on opère, des traits qu'on établit comme pertinants, des continuités qu'on admet, ou des exclusions qu'on pratiques." "Nevertheless, these aspects of an individual which we designate as making him an author are only a projection, in more or less psychologizing terms, of the operations we force texts to undergo, the connections we make, the traits we establish as pertinent, the continuities we recognize, or the exclusions we practice." Transl. Harari in Rabinow and Rose 2003, 384.

Reception

A fundamental principle here will be that the existence of a text is not limited to its moment of composition but includes a potentially endless number of later interactions with it by readers. An important reason to inquire into records of such previous interactions with the text, its "history of effect" (*Wirkungsgeschichte*), is according to Hans-Georg Gadamer that it enables us to recognize our own understanding as a historically effected event, it makes us reflect on our preconceptions and helps us to ask the right questions to the text.[23] This perspective was firmly introduced in literary studies and developed by Hans Robert Jauss through the concept of reception,[24] and was actively incorporated into the discipline of Classics primarily by Charles Martindale. These ideas condition the over-all structure of this book: In the first part we will approach the poem's reception in various ways, partly as an unavoidable aspect of the text's existence which is interesting in its own right, but also to remind us of our own position, identify common preconceptions to avoid and productive problems to explore, in this way arriving at a more reflected reading of the text.[25] In this context, I should stress that the reception of Proba—as with many poets who have fallen under the unfortunate label *poetae minores*—differs in many aspects from that of canonical authors such as Homer, Virgil and Ovid. The amounts of documented reactions are much fewer and it is therefore difficult to produce a coherent historical narrative of her reception. However, this may turn out to be a positive circumstance, since the scholarly emplotment of such data is rarely an innocent or very transparent activity. Moreover, Proba's *Cento* has generated and (as you read this) still generates much scholarly reception, but has rarely been appropriated in creative contexts. Reception studies tend to focus on works that form part of and transform the same genre as the received text (cf. e.g. the epic chain of Homer–Virgil–Dante–Milton), but in the case of Proba, the reception has generally taken place in fundamentally different textual settings; rarely in epics, short poems or prose fiction, and mainly in prefaces to editions, in commentaries, encyclopedic entries, literary histories, essays on education and articles in scholarly journals dealing with the identity of its author, its date, literary value, theological appropriateness, relationship to Virgil etc.[26] To put it briefly, its reception is not only bound up with, but

23 Gadamer 2004 (1960), 299–306; cf. Martindale 1993, xiii: "the interpretation of texts is inseparable from the history of their reception."

24 Jauss 1982, 3–45.

25 Cf. Martindale 2006, 8.

26 For a similar situation see Skoie 2002.

is inseparable from the history of scholarship.[27] Since the notion of objective truth often pervades scholarly discourse, it is vital that we pay attention to the ideological underpinnings of the texts that we will be studying, and the oblique ways in which they operate. We will see how scholars condemn Proba by projecting the misogynist opinions of their own societies to intermediary ancient authorities (chapter 2) or even to Proba herself (chapters 5–6), alternatively try to justify her work by finding traditional family values in the midst of the centonic polyphony (see chapter 1).

In the second part we will direct our attention to the text itself, but to some extent it will be studied as an act of reception of Virgil, *Genesis* and the Gospels: the exegetical foundation of the undertaking to "declare that Virgil sang about the pious feats of Christ" (*Cento* 23), the focus on certain characters and episodes in the Virgilian poems, the restructuring and merging of biblical episodes—all of this expresses a specific mode of confronting Virgil and the Bible. There is a risk, however, that 'reception' will terminologically reduce the *Cento* to a 'reading', not an active appropriation,[28] therefore to conceptualize the centonic process I will utilize the terms, 're-use' and 'recycling', which also lie closer to the patchwork metaphor.

Genre

Regarding discussions about the concept 'genre', three basic ideas will be important in this study: (1) A literary text belongs to a 'genre' or literary kind only in relation to other texts through resemblances in form and content. Therefore, a text can only fulfill the criteria for being placed in a genre in relation to other texts.[29] (2) A genre develops and changes over time, often as texts adopt elements from different genres, so when identifying a genre it is necessary to look at not only one but many features and how they are combined.[30] (3) Genre is not merely a classificatory instrument, but a literary code that affects how the reader interprets the text;[31] once a reader has identified the genre certain expectations come into play that may or may not be fulfilled.

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27 Cf. Haynes 2006, 45: "the reception of classics is bound to the history of scholarship, […] and the history of the notions of truth and expertise within which scholarship operated."

28 On the term reception Goldhill 2002, 297: "too blunt, too *passive* [Goldhill's italics] a term for the dynamics of resistance and appropriation, recognition and self-aggrandisment that make up this drama of cultural identity"; cf. Martindale 2006, 11.

29 Fowler 1982, 20–24.

30 Fowler 1982, 54–74; 149–169.

31 Fowler 1982, 20–24.

Centos have been referred to as a genre[32] or a subgenre,[33] but others have raised the objection that they differ from one another on the level of content.[34] Verweyen and Witting, for instance, prefer to call cento an *écriture*, "such as parody, travesty, contrafracture, and pastische".[35] This view has recently been followed by Martin Bažil, who affirms that cento is not a literary genre but a particular compositional technique.[36] However, from the criteria listed in the first paragraph of this section, it will be useful to recognize the literary kinship between centos and consider them as a genre: on a theoretical level, due to their formal similarities with one another, on the practical level, because authors and readers of centos interact with the text with specific expectations. As Scott McGill puts it: "no matter how lofty the genre it replicates, a cento is always at bottom a cento".[37] A trait of this genre is the blending of a whole range of different genres: centos tend to be naturally transgeneric.[38] Virgilian centos will inevitably bring together epic (*Aeneid*), didactic poetry (*Georgics*) and pastoral poetry (*Eclogues*), and in most cases one or several additional genres are incorporated: Hosidius Geta's *Medea* adds tragedy, Ausonius adds epithalamion to his *Nuptial Cento* etc. In many cases the centonists also renew and subvert the conventions of the incorporated genres. Here, Stephen Harrison's terms 'guest' and 'host' genre may be applied: centos representing the generic base ('host' genre) that integrates one or several episodic modes from other genres ('guest' genres).[39] To accommodate the various biblical narratives, Proba taps into different generic modes in the Virgilian opus, using theogonic passages for the creation, the 'tragic' story of Aeneas and Dido for the Fall and heroic epic for the feats of Christ (yet with an epyllic rejection of the closely related theme

32 Lamacchia 1958, 214; De Lubac 1964, 246; Kartschoke 1975, 36; Vidal 1983, 246; Bright 1984, 81; Schnapp 1992, 100; Green 1995, 554; Green 1997, 548; Hoesterey 2001, 80; Plant 2004, 3; Pollmann 2004, 81–82; Cooper 2007, 65; Juvan 2008, 36; Ziolkowski and Putnam 2008, 482; Díaz Patri 2009, 51; Tucker 2009, 151, 155; Sowers 2010, 32; Grafton, Most and Settis 2010, 189; Smith 2011, 171; Sandnes 2011, 27, 43; Curran 2012, 327.

33 Skinner 1996, 118; Dykes 2011, 156.

34 Stehlíková 1987, 12; Cazes 1998, 25–26; Margoni-Kögler 2001, 117; Meconi 2004, 110; Bažil 2009, 12.

35 Verweyen and Witting 1991, 172.

36 Bažil 2009, 12: "ce terme ne désigne pas un simple genre littéraire, mais une technique d'écriture particulière"; cf. Cazes 1998, 26: "… il est impossible de classer le centon comme genre: c'est bien plutôt un proceédé, une contrainte, en bref, une technique d'écriture." Cf. also Audano 2012, 230.

37 McGill 2005, 8.

38 Pollmann 2004, 89 and 95 n. 87.

39 Harrison 2007, 9–16, esp. 16.

of war). The host genre could be described as an epic cento, but the *Cento* of Proba is also, as Karla Pollmann points out, a didactic poem with a clear protreptic function: "with personal address to the reader and exemplary illustrative episodes".[40]

Intertextuality

In order not to restrict the meaning of intertextuality to "the banal sense of 'study of sources'"[41] it is important to keep the concepts of 'allusion' and 'intertextuality' apart, as Kristeva originally argued and as Don Fowler stressed within the field of Classics. The latter term will be used to denote the circumstance that all texts are composed within a matrix of other texts. Authors and readers have no choice but to participate in this system, in which the text is situated, just like any utterance is situated in language.[42] An 'allusion' on the other hand, designates a specific intertextual link when recognized as such by the reader. Whether the author intended this link to be perceived, or a learned contemporary reader *would have* perceived it, is often invoked by a reader in order to legitimize his or her interpretation; yet, this hermeneutic practice stands a greater chance to confirm rather than challenge preconceptions about the text, and hence it will be avoided here.[43]

Accordingly, centos are not more or less intertextual than any other text, but the way in which they form part of this system is a distinctive feature. All texts—*parole*—are produced and interpreted in relation to an intertextual *langue*, but in the case of Proba's *Cento* the *langue* is completely determined and defined by the *parole* of Virgil. Due to this circumstance, allusions in a

40 Pollmann 2004, 89; cf. also Harich-Schwarzbauer 2009, 335.

41 Kristeva 1974, 59–60: "Le terme d'intertextualité désigne cette transposition d'un (ou de plusieurs) système(s) de signes en un autre; mais puisque ce terme a été souvent entendu dans le sens banal de 'critique des sources' d'un text".

42 Cf. Conte 1986, 29: "Intertextuality, far from being a matter of merely recognizing the ways in which specific texts echo each other, defines the condition of literary readability. Certainly the sense and structure of a work can be grasped only with reference to other models hewn from a long series of texts of which they are, in some way, the variant form."; Nugent 1990, 39: "Intertextuality stresses that the individual text comes into being in a space already populated by earlier texts and is inevitably entangled in a nexus of relations to those other texts; indeed, it can only speak in relation to what has already been spoken."; Fowler 2000, 119: "The textual system exists before any text, and texts are born always already situated within that system, like it or not. Just as no person can escape her or his historical situatedness, so no text can exist except against the matrix of possibilities created by those pre-existing texts."

43 Cf. Conte 1986, 29–69; Fowler 2000, 115–121, esp. 118–119; McGill 2005, 27–28.

cento tend to be read in slightly different ways than in most other texts. An allusion is usually studied as a limited similarity or correspondence in one text that evokes another text, potentially along with its context, contents, style, themes, genre etc. Disparities and affinities between the evoked and present texts establish dialogues between them. In a cento, however, each and every line is potentially recognizable as an allusion to some part in a predetermined body of text. This particularity has prompted scholars to answer the question of 'how an allusion in a cento works' yet the criteria of such models tend to reduce the polysemic complexity of its allusivity. The first attempt to draw up such definitions was made by Rosa Lamacchia who stressed that the quotations in a cento will either stand in contrast or analogy with its significance in the original context,[44] later a recurring theme in theoretical discussions about centos. Giovanni Polara, on the other hand, suggested that a quotation in a cento operates as an 'allusion by antanaclasis' i.e. a quotation with two different significations, where one is the true and originally intended one and the other is 'defamiliarized' and has little allusive weight to the original meaning.[45] One might object that readers always can (and often have) read the quotations as allusive in various ways. This position, however, makes for a text that is clotted with references and many seem to have felt that the very integrity of a cento depends on some quotations not being taken as allusions.[46] Jeffrey Schnapp classified the quotations in the *Cento* of Proba either as "productive" or merely functioning as a "connective tissue" in the narrative, the latter chosen "at random".[47] Dealing with the same problem, McGill suggested that some quotations may have been used more for their allusive weight, others more for their "semantic aptness" but concludes that there is no way for the reader to determine any authorial intention in this regard and that "there is no such thing as an allusively inert verse unit in any cento".[48] This latter attitude has been clearly expressed in Philip Hardie's discussion on the hierarchy between centonic allusions. With an ethos of anti-authoritarianism he asks: "But once we allow these 'dominant' voices to be heard, where do we stop? Is there an 'underclass' of half lines whose voices are not to be heard?" His answer is to

44 Lamacchia 1958, 208–209. Cf. also Cacioli 1969, Herzog 1975, and Schnapp 1992.

45 Polara 1990, 267–268, cf. Consolino 1983, 146–147

46 Cf. Hinds 2014, 182: "the typical new-wave article or essay rehabilitating the cento tends to be selective rather than comprehensive in its reading, but that very selectivity may dodge the central interpretative challenge raised by the cento form."

47 Schnapp 1992, 113–117.

48 McGill 2005, 25–29, esp. 25.

think of a "democracy of readers" in which "each of us [is] free to exercise our own choices of combination, to choose our own emphasis, to shape our own patterns of allusion".[49] This does not mean that we are completely 'free'; interpretation always occurs in dialogue with the tradition, and we cannot deny our dependence on concepts such as genre conventions or historicity when debating the validity of an interpretation.[50] The point is that we should avoid the overly schematic and restrictive models of interpretations that have often characterized studies of centos.[51] This is the perspective adopted in the present study, and the openness of the *Cento* will not be considered as a problem that we need to overcome, but as a constitutive part of its literariness.

Some Terms and Concepts

To describe the relationship between the Virgilian and biblical texts and the *Cento* I will frequently make use of Gérard Genette's terms 'hypertext' and 'hypotext'. The hypertext derives from the hypotext and changes it either "by saying the same thing differently" (what Genette calls transformation) or "by saying another thing similarly" (imitation).[52] In this case, the hypertext (the *Cento*) has two hypotexts that it imitates and transforms (the Virgilian and the biblical texts).

In the *Cento*, the hypertext juxtaposes and merges the diegeses of the hypotexts, creating a new narrative in which the individual verses produce new meaning. A representative example is when a verse that describes the serpent which strangles Laocoön in the *Aeneid* is used for the serpent in paradise, thus connecting these events to one another in the system of significance of the *Cento* (173; *A* 2.204) (pp. 151–53, 182). This phenomenon in the *Cento* has been described with the term 'typology',[53] i.e. the hermeneutic system found with many early Christian exegetes according to whom the characters and events

49 Hardie 2007, 176.

50 Cf. McGill 2005, 27–28.

51 Cf. McGill 2005, 25: "Because each *membrum* can be identified as a secondary Virgilian segment, there is no such thing as an allusively inert verse unit in any cento." See also Hinds 2014.

52 Genette 1997, 5–7; The concept of hypertextuality has previously been applied to Virgilian centos by Pollmann 2004; cf. also McGill 2005, 24; Bažil 2009, 59–64; Harich-Schwarzbauer 2009; Formisano and Sogno 2010, 381–382; Arcidiacono 2011; Sandnes 2011, 121–124; Formisano 2012, 524.

53 Herzog and Schmidt 1993, 387; von Albrecht 1997, 1316; Jensen 1998, 43–48; Margoni-Kögler 2001²; Margoni-Kögler 2001, 127–129; Pollmann 2004, 88–91; Harich-Schwarzbauer 2009, 343–344; Schottenius 2010; Cullhed Schottenius 2012.

in the Old Testament ('types') are fulfilled in characters and events in the New Testament ('antitypes').[54] Erich Auerbach adapted this concept to literary texts in his *Figura*,[55] and 'typology' has often been applied in analyses of texts from various periods.[56]

"I will declare that Virgil sang about the pious feats of Christ" (23). This verse exhorts us to understand the greater hypertextual structure of the *Cento* as a typological project.[57] The two hypotexts are merged, and characters and events from the Virgilian texts become prefigurations or 'types' of biblical 'antitypes'. Thus, Christianity is presented as the fulfillment of the Roman history.[58] These connections, where the type is non-biblical and the antitype is biblical, will be called 'semi-biblical typologies'.[59] The *Cento* also contains reenactments of regular 'biblical typologies', often reinforced via the Virgilian hypotext. For instance, verses originally referring to Dido are often used to describe both Eve and Mary. A semi-biblical typology connects the Carthaginian queen to both biblical characters, but in this process Eve and Mary are also connected with one another as type and antitype (see chapter 5–6). The third category present in the *Cento* is the 'internal typology', meaning that it is confined to the work.[60] For instance, when the same verse is used in relation to the birth of Christ (380) and the Sermon on the Mount: "When the great circle of time is completed" (*perfecto temporis orbe*, 474; *A* 6.745), connecting the two events. This internal typology also has an external type in the Virgilian narrative, where it describes the final stage of the transmigration of the soul in the cosmological speech of Anchises. In this way, spiritual rebirth links the birth of Christ and the future of righteous Christians. Through such operations, Roman pagan, Hebrew and Roman Christian master narratives—as Marc Mastrangelo puts it on the subject of Prudentius—are unified in one salvation history.[61]

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54 On the topic of typology in general, see Goppelt 1982, (originally published in 1939). See also the recent critque of the modern notion of typology in DiMattei 2008.

55 Auerbach 1984.

56 Hollander 1977; Landow 1980, 3–12; Fabiny 1992, 1–4; Horsfall 1995, 162–167; Young 1997, 117–212, esp. 200–201.

57 Cf. Margoni-Kögler 2001^2, 147.

58 Cf. Schnapp 1992, 112–114; Jensen 1998, 42.

59 On semi-biblical typologies see Ohly 1977, 366; cf. also Green 2002, 103: "only one pole, type or antitype, is biblical, the other is not."

60 On internal typology see Green 2002, 103 and 106: "[…] involving no longer the conjunction of two separate texts, the type and the antitype, but the incorporation of the two poles of typology within the same work, imbuing it with a structural tension."

61 Cf. Prudentius in Mastrangelo 2008, 41–46.

A valuable concept to define typologies in the *Cento* is Reinhart Herzog's term 'leading reminiscence' *Leitreminiszenz*.[62] Similar to a musical Leitmotiv ('leading motif') it occurs when a large number of verses from one particular passage in the Virgilian hypotext are re-used in connection to a specific character or episode in the hypertextual *Cento*. For instance, several verses describing the death of Caesar in the first book of the *Georgics* occur as a leading reminiscence in the narration of the crucifixion and ascension of Christ (*Cento* 627–637; *G* 1.468, 469, 471, 438 and 467).[63] For Herzog, these traits bring clarity to a polyphonic and potentially chaotic textual structure. He thus rejects the instances where the quotations suddenly do not resonate with these leading reminiscences, but we should not expect absolute symmetry and accept the more enigmatic and momentaneous typological connections of the *Cento*.[64]

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62 Cf. also Schnapp 1992, 114: "clustered citations establish a multilayered convergence between Virgil's books and the Holy Book."

63 Herzog 1975, 12, 21–26.

64 Cf. Pollmann 2002, 229–230; Pollmann 2004, 96, n. 100: "Therefore the criticism [...] that Proba's *cento* is not clear enough, is not quite appropriate. The character of riddle and allusion are an essential part of a *cento*."

CHAPTER 1

Proba the Poet

The Onymity of the Cento

The *Cento* opens with the narrator recalling and rejecting her earlier writings on the theme of war. After this God is invoked to "receive this sacred song" (*sacrum accipe carmen*, 9) but also to open up her heart and bestow upon her an extraordinary power:

> [...] arcana ut possim vatis Proba cuncta referre.
>
> [...] in order that I, Proba, may disclose all mysteries of the poet.
>
> *Cento* 12

This translation, however, is not the only possible one. The word *vatis*, "prophet" or "poet", does not necessarily refer to Virgil (and perhaps the Cumaean Sibyl)—note that in a fifteenth-century manuscript *vatis* is glossed *Virgilii*—,[1] but it may also be taken as an attribute of the subject in the nominative case: "I, Proba the prophet/poet may disclose all mysteries", which has often been the case in modern scholarship.[2] Alternatively, we could take *proba* as the adjective "good" referring either to *vatis* as a subject: "I, the worthy prophet/ poet", or to *arcana*, giving the completely different translation: "in order that I may disclose all the good mysteries of the prophet/poet". This sort of ambiguity is not uncommon in the *Cento*.

By mentioning or alluding to her own name, Proba broke with the conventions of the epic genre, thereby introducing an element that one would normally associate with the intimacy of lyric poetry or elegy. She also assured

1 Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliotheek, Clm 526, 57^{r}.

2 Thus in their translation Clark and Hatch 1981, 15: "I, Proba, prophetess"; Reedy 1981, 45: "I, Proba the seer"; Snyder 1991, 137; "I, Proba the seer"; Cazes 1998, 45: "Proba, l'inspiré chantre"; Margoni-Kögler 2001, 126: "I, Proba the seer"; Plant 2004, 172: "I, Proba, prophet"; Sineri 2011, 43: "Proba vate, [...] io"; Badini and Rizzi 2011, 75: "io, Proba, vate". See also Springer 1988, 81; Schnapp 1992, 108, 120; Green 1995, 558; Green 1997, 553; Kaczynski 2002, 131; Stevenson 2005, 66; Trout 2005, 553; Curran 2012, 330; Sineri 2012, 94–96. Cf. Wiesen 1971, 72 and Bažil 2009, 119 n. 17 arguing for taking *vatis* as a genitive to *arcana*.

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the poem's 'onymity', i.e. its bearing the name of an author.[3] As we will see in this chapter, we know little about the historical person Proba; however, the inscription of her name into the poem in itself has been of great significance for its reception. Most extant ancient centos are anonymous, such as the majority of those included in the *The Latin Anthology*, a modern collection consisting of short Latin poems, mainly from the compilation made around 534 preserved in the Codex Salmasianus (Par. lat. 10318, 7th century);[4] however, in the most recent edition the centos were excluded since the editor did not wish to "renew this insult to Virgil".[5] When examining the reception of these works we are given the impression that without an author of its own a cento is more likely to appear as a cheap forgery of the centonized text. It is clear that the centos in this collection that have been transmitted together with an authorial name—although we know virtually nothing about the historical person—have received more attention than the anonymous ones, and have occasionally been published in separate editions too.[6] The names that have been associated with some of these centos, i.e. Hosidius Geta, Mavortius and Pomponius, come with no biographical data, but they help us to sort and classify the texts: to "define them, differentiate them from and contrast them to others",[7] thus placing them in a more central position within this periphery of the canon.

Accordingly, the way in which Proba sealed her name into the *Cento* alone had a huge significance for its reception. The signature has prompted scholars to identify her with Faltonia Betitia Proba (or, in some cases, Anicia Faltonia Proba), collect notices about the life of this person and try to identify further autobiographical material in the text. The desire for this historical person behind the *Cento* is often explicit: "We know nothing of Proba except the tantalizing bits of information that may be gleaned from her cento" as one

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3 Cf. Genette 1997^2, 39–42.

4 For notes on this collection, see Spallone 1982; Tarrant 1983; Vredeveld 1998.

5 Shackleton Bailey 1982. See the preface (p. 1): "The Virgilian Centos [Riese 7–18], affronts to literature, neither require much critical scrutiny, nor am I the kind of person who can stand insulting the venerable poet by re-editing them." (*Centones Vergiliani, opprobria litterarum, neque ope critica multum indigent neque is sum qui vati reverendo denuo haec edendo contumeliam imponere sustineam*).

6 Hosidius Geta in Salanitro 1981, Lamacchia 1981; Luxurius in Happ 1986; Proba in Sineri 2011 and Badini and Rizzi 2011; Pomponius in Arcidiacono 2011. See discussion on Mavortius and the editions of *De ecclesia* in Damico 2010, 27–30.

7 Foucault in ed. Rabinow and Rose 2003, 381.

scholar recently remarked.[8] The possibility to construct an author with a name and certain biographical attributes has also been significant for the ways in which the text is interpreted. The end of studying the *Cento* has often been to establish the historical person's intentions, social views and personality.

The Historical Proba

The exact identity of 'Proba' has been a debated issue ever since the sixteenth century. The main problem lies in that we know of two different women in the fourth century that could be associated with the *Cento*. It basically comes down to whether or not we believe the testimony provided by Isidore of Seville:[9]

> Proba uxor Adelphi proconsulis femina inter viros ecclesiasticos idcirco posita sola pro eo quod in laude Christi versata est, componens centonem de Christo virgilianis coaptatum versiculis. Cujus quidem non miramur studium sed laudamus ingenium. Quod tamen opusculum legitur inter apocryphas scripturas insertum.
>
> Proba, wife of the proconsul Adelphius; a woman, and in this respect, she stands alone among the men of the church, because she busied herself with praising Christ, composing a cento about Christ fitted together with Virgilian verses. Although we do not admire her endeavour, we praise her ingenuity. Yet, this little work is placed among the apocryphal scriptures.
>
> *On Famous Men* 5, CODOÑER MERINO 1964, 136

If Isidore's attribution is correct, the centonist Faltonia Betitia Proba was the daughter of Petronius Probianus (consul in 322), wife of Clodius Celsinus Adelphius (urban prefect of Rome in 351), and mother of Q. Clodius Hermogeni-

8 Salisbury 2001, 288.

9 See also *Etymologiae* 1.39.26: "Moreover, Proba, wife of Adelphius, produced a cento out of Virgil on the creation of the world and the Gospels in a most complete fashion, the subject matter being arranged according to the verse and the verse according to the subject matter. Likewise, a certain Pomponius, besides other trifles from his pen, composed Tityrus in honour of Christ from the same poet, and likewise also one from the Aeneid" (*Denique Proba, uxor Adelphi, centonem ex Vergilio de Fabrica mundi et Evangeliis plenissime expressit, materia conposita secundum versus, et versibus secundum materiam concinnatis. Sic quoque et quidam Pomponius ex eodem poeta inter cetera stili sui otia Tityrum in Christi honorem conposuit: similiter et de Aeneidos.*)

anus Olybrius (consul in 379) and Faltonius Probus Alypius (prefect of Rome in 391).[10] Other testimonies that support this identification are the following:

(1) A title in a lost tenth-century manuscript from a Benedictine monastery outside Mutina reported by Bernard de Montfaucon (1655–1741) in 1697: "Proba, the wife of Adelphius, mother of Olybrius and Alypius, wrote about emperor Constantius' war against Magnentius and then also this book."[11]

(2) The title in a ninth century manuscript: "Here begins the notes on the cento of Proba, the illustrious Roman. A mother of the Anicians, this aforementioned Proba, wife of the city prefect Adelphius, prudently and plainly plucked together [*defloravit*] this cento with her pious mind, love of Christ and fervent spirit from the book of Maro, or Virgil, the Mantuan poet."[12]

(3) A title in an eleventh century manuscript: "Here begins the Virgilian cento of Genesis and the Gospels by the prominent woman Faltonia Betitia Proba."[13] In the same manuscript, the "sweet husband" addressed at the end of the poem is glossed "Alypius", but this is a scribal error.[14]

Some have questioned the validity of this data and argued that the author of the *Cento* was Faltonia Betitia Proba's granddaughter Anicia Faltonia Proba († before 432), wife of Petronius Probus († c. 390), mother of Olybrius and Probinus (joint consuls in 395) and Probus (consul 406).[15] We know much more

10 See for instance Giraldi 1545, 635; Fontanini 1723 (1708), 191–202; Wolf 1735, 349–351; Schenkl 1888, 513–514; Ermini 1909, 5–8; Chastagnol 1962, 131–132, 178, 236, 292; Clark and Hatch 1981, 97–102; Matthews 1992; Herzog and Schmidt 1993, 385; Green 1995; Disselkamp 1997, 140–141; Margoni-Kögler 2001, 121–124; Pollmann 2002, 226, n. 42; Testa 2004, 117–119; Green 2008; Cameron 2011, 327–337; Badini and Rizzi 2011, 13–19; Sineri 2011, 20–26.

11 Montfaucon 1702, 36: *Proba uxor Adelphi, mater Olibrii, & Aliepii* (*sic pro Alypii*)*, cum Constantini* (*sic pro Constantii*) *bellum adversus Magnentium conscripsisset, conscripsit et hunc librum*; cf. Schenkl 1888, 513.

12 Pal. lat. 1753, f. 62r: *Incipiunt indicula centonis Probae, inlustris Romanae; Aniciorum mater de Maronis qui et Vergilii, Mantuani vatis libri praedicta Proba, uxor Adelphii, ex praefecto urbis, hunc centon*(*em*) *religiosa mente amore Christi spiritu ferventi prudenter enucliate defloravit.* Cf. Schenkl 1888, 519; Pellegrin and Fohlen 1982, 400–404.

13 Reg. lat. 1666, f. 41r: *Flatonie Vetitie Probe clarissime femine Vergiliocenton Genesis et Evangeliorum incipit.* See Pellegrin 1978, 345–346.

14 Green 1995, 552; Green 2008, 275.

15 Meibom (Helmstadt 1597), in a note at the end of his edition under the heading *Scholia*; Oudin 1722, 900–901; von Aschbach 1870, 422–425; Shanzer 1986 and 1994; Barnes 2006.

about this younger Proba, who was quite an influential woman, praised in inscriptions[16] and in a panegyric by Claudian to her sons Olybrius and Probinus.[17] We also know her as the addressee of letters from prominent intellectuals throughout the Empire, such as John Chrysostom (*Letter* 168). After the sack of Rome by the Goths in 410, she fled to North Africa with her daughter-in-law, Anicia Juliana (Olybrius' widow) and her daughter Demetrias, where they corresponded with Jerome (*Letter* 130), Augustine (*Letters* 130; 131; 150) and Pelagius.[18]

The arguments for and against this alternative are the following:

(1) The *Cento* must have been written after 384 (and accordingly by Anicia Proba) because there are verbal similarities between verses 13–17 and the poem *Carmen Contra Paganos* (20–24).[19] This argument has been rejected since there are no "grounds for determining priority".[20]

(2) The *Cento* must have been written after 387 (and accordingly by Anicia Proba) because the epilogue (689–694) alludes to a debate about when to celebrate Easter, which took place in 387.[21] It has been objected that it might just as well allude to some earlier debate on this matter.[22] Moreover, the reference to the feast is by no means explicit.

(3) Jerome is believed to allude to the *Cento* in Letter 53 from 394. Some take this as an indication that Anicia Proba is the author since they feel that Jerome is referring to a person who is alive,[23] while others argue the opposite: that Jerome never would have insulted Anicia Proba, "the richest, noblest and most powerful woman in Rome".[24] Note, however, that the reference to the *Cento* is far from certain (see chapter 2).

(4) The *Cento* cannot have been written by Faltonia Betitia Proba, since she had died when the war between Magnentius and Constantius took place,

16 "To Anicia Faltonia Proba, trustee of the ancient nobility, pride of the Anician family, a model of the preservation and teaching of chastity, descendant of consuls, mother of consuls; her most loyal children Anicius Hermogenianus Olybrius, v(ir) c(larissimus), consul ordinarius and his wife Anicia Juliana, c(larissima) f(emina) dedicated this." CIL VI. 1755; Rome. Croke and Harries 1982, 116.

17 *Panegyric for Olybrius and Probinus* 176–206; cf. Wheeler 2007, 103.

18 Consolino 2006, 110–118.

19 Shanzer 1986.

20 Quotation from Cameron 2011, 331, see also 328–331, 337; cf. Green 2008, 271–272.

21 Shanzer 1994, 91–96.

22 Green 2008, 372–374.

23 Shanzer 1994, 82–83; Barnes 2006, 256.

24 Quotation from Cameron 2011, 337; cf. Fontanini 1723 (1708) 242; Delepierre 1866, 74.

which is incompatible with the common assumption that the first eight verses allude to this war.[25] But the argument for this early year of death (351) is based on assumptions that have been proven to be uncertain,[26] and it should also be noted that this war is not explicitly mentioned in the *Cento* (pp. 114–117).

(5) Anicia Proba must have written the *Cento*, since she is called "mother of the Anicians" (*Aniciorum matrem*) in one manuscript (Pal. lat. 1753), and Faltonia Betitia Proba was not an Anician. Furthermore, the title of "eminent Roman Mistress" (*inlustris Romanae*) in the same manuscript was more common in the fifth century.[27] But these denominations could have been added by medieval scribes, who would easily confuse the rather obscure older Proba with the much more famous Anicia.[28] Faltonia Betitia Proba is clearly the *lectio difficilior*.

(6) Anicia Proba could not have written the *Cento*, because in that case, Claudian would have mentioned her poetic works or skills in the section where he praises her in the panegyric to her two sons Probinus and Olybrius.[29]

To summarize, as of yet, the evidence for discrediting Isidore's attribution is not sufficient, and so, I will assume that the *Cento* was written in the mid-fourth century by Faltonia Betitia Proba. Yet, as long as we are studying the reception of the *Cento* and the ways in which its author has been conceptualized, we need to keep in mind that the identification of Proba has been a variable rather than a constant.

Proba the Sibyl and Scholar

During the Middle Ages, discussions concerning the author of the *Cento* were generally limited to repeating the basic information provided by Isidore of Seville.[30] Among the notable exceptions is the inscription mentioned above in

25 Barnes 2006, 251–254.

26 Matthews 1992, 295–298; Green 2008, 268–269; Cameron 2011, 335–336.

27 Shanzer 1986, 234–235, n. 22; Shanzer 1994, 77, 90, n. 97.

28 Matthews 1992, 290–291; cf. also Green 1995, 552–553; Cameron 2011, 332–333.

29 Cameron 2011, 336; cf. Fontanini 1723 (1708), 206; Delepierre 1866, 74–75.

30 E.g. the Benedictine friar Honorius of Autun (c. 1080/90–1150) in the third book of *De luminaribus ecclesiae sive de scriptoribus ecclesiasticis* ('Ex Isidoro sublectus') and Vincent

a ninth century Paris manuscript, where Proba's piety is stressed: she composed the *Cento* "with a pious mind, love of Christ and fervent spirit" (*religiosa mente amore Christi spiritu ferventi*).[31] Another example would be the inscription in the lost manuscript that was seen by Montfaucon, claiming that Proba first "wrote about Constantius' war against Magnentius and then also this book".[32] This note seems to reflect a biographical reading of the poem's introductory lines, where the poet rejects themes of war (p. 116). We can also see that Proba's self-representation as a prophet in some cases influenced the codicological contexts in which the *Cento* was placed. For instance, in a thirteenth century manuscript, the text is found together with the Latin prophecy of the Tiburtine Sibyl.[33] Proba's connection to the prophets is also hinted at in a letter from 1316 by the Paduan pre-humanist Albertino Mussato (1261–1329) (pp. 62–63). This perspective on the *Cento* found its fullest expression during the early Renaissance when the poem was printed along with treatises on the views of Augustine and Jerome on prophecy and on the twelve ancient Sibyls by the Dominican Filippo Barbieri (1481). One of the earliest illustrated books to be printed in Europe, it contains woodcuts of twelve Sibyls alongside twelve prophets from the Old Testament. In addition to these we also find an image of Proba, visually inserting her among the ancient female seers. There are considerable variations between the woodcuts used for the different Sibyls in the individual copies of this edition, but in the incunabula that I have consulted, Proba is represented as a young lady with her hair down, holding in her left hand a scroll that is flowing in the wind (Figure 1). In the following year, this work was reprinted with new woodcuts and Proba was included again (Figure 2). Compared to the other portraits in this volume, there is a greater emphasis on learning and writing. Like the other Sibyls, she grips a flowing scroll in her right hand, but in her left she also holds up an open codex (a feature she shares only with the Sibyl of Cumae; see Figure 3), and a large number of books lie at her feet, perhaps representing the Bible and the Virgilian poems. Barbieri's collection was reprinted in various editions and formats over

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de Beauvais (c. 1190–1264) who quoted Isidore's account in *De Speculum doctrinale* III; cf. Moricca 1928, 861; Ermini 1909, 66; Hoch 1997, 22–23.

31 Pal. lat. 1753, 62^r; cf. Schenkl 1888, 519; Pellegrin and Fohlen 1982, 400–404.

32 Montfaucon 1702, 36; cf. Schenkl 1888, 513.

33 St John's College Library, 98, the *Cento* of Proba is found on fs. 3^r–13^v and is immediatly followed by the oracle of the Tiburtine Sibyl fs. 14^r–17^r, see Hanna 2002, 135–141, esp. 135. On the oracle of the Tibutrine Sibyl see Sackur 1898, 177–187; Holdenried 2006, xix–xx.

the coming fifty years with many variations,[34] constantly restating the idea of Proba as a sort of semi-prophet who had revealed the Christian truth in Virgil.

From early on, Proba was also idolized as a learned rather than a divinely inspired author. Prominent humanists continuously emphasized her erudition and exceptional memory, and they often praised her for her knowledge of Greek, a skill that she was probably ascribed because "Homeric and Virgilian centos" were mentioned in connection to her name by Isidore.[35] In the fourteenth century, she is mentioned by Petrarch (1304–1374) as an example of a learned woman in a letter to Anna von Schweidnitz (1339–1362), the third wife of the Holy Roman emperor Charles IV. He congratulates the empress for her newly born daughter and praises female geniuses, referring to Proba as one of many great women of the past including Sappho and divinely inspired Sibyls:

> Proba quedam, Adelphi uxor, utriusque gnara sermonis, apud grecos homericis apud nos virgilianis versis in rem suam versibus, mundi originem et fortunas patrum et Cristi adventum historiamque brevissime suo quidem ordine alienis verbis amplexa est.
>
> A certain Proba, wife of Adelphius, who knew both languages, used the Homeric verses of the Greeks and our Virgilian verses for her own purpose and related the origin of the world, the fate of the fathers, the coming of Christ and the whole history very briefly, in the words of others but in her own order.
>
> *Letters on Familiar Matters* 21.8.6

Petrarch's characterization of Proba was echoed by Giovanni Boccaccio (1313–1375) in *Famous Women*, who also praises her for her Homeric cento.[36] The skills required for anyone to compose a Greek cento must indeed have been impressing for these philo-Hellenes with very scarce actual knowledge of the Greek language.[37] In general, the *Cento* is read as a monument to the skills of

34 Herolt and Riessinger (Rome 1482); Benali (Venice 1495); Köbel (Oppenheim 1517 [1514]); cf. Cazes 1998, 317.

35 Isid. *orig.* 1.39.25–26; cf. also Badini and Rizzi 2011, 59.

36 See the edition in Brown 2001, 410–417.

37 Cf. Wilson 1992, 2–7; for the idea that Proba wrote the Homeric cento see also Polenton in Ziolkowski and Putnam 2008, 329–330, 341–342; Manutius (Venice 1501), 3. The same claim is found in Tacuino (Venice 1513), 1; Dufour, see the edition of Jeanneau 1970, 143; see also example in Cazes 1998, 77. See also Cooper 2013, 142 "According to an ancient source,

the historical person Proba and the intellectual potential of the female sex: she was educated in the liberal arts and knew the works of Virgil completely by heart.[38] Besides her mnemonic skills, Boccaccio also held her idea of writing a *Cento*—her invention—in high esteem, resulting from an "insight, that from his [Virgil's] poems one could compile the history of the Old and New Testaments in pleasing, easy, and delectable verse." He is especially impressed with the seamlessness of the *Cento*; even a learned man would not be able to "detect the stitches" (*compages advertere*) and a less educated person could easily believe that Virgil had been "both a prophet and evangelist". Unlike Barbieri, Boccaccio does not present Proba as a Sibyl unlocking the prophetic secrets of Virgilian poetry, but he admires that she achieves this illusion and states that he himself often consulted her *Cento*.

This view of Proba as an industrious and learned author is reflected in visual representations of her, found in a number of illuminated manuscripts containing this work of Boccaccio. She is often portrayed as a young scholar at her writing desk, surrounded by a large number of books, symbolizing her erudition and the creative process of cento writing (see figure 4 for an example).[39] There is, however, one exception in a manuscript of the first known French translation that was owned by and perhaps made for the French regent Louise of Savoy (1476–1531). In an illumination in this luxurious volume, Proba is represented as an older woman wearing a white veil and red dress, emerging out of a cloud. In her right hand she holds a rod pointed towards a starry night sky, which seems to symbolize the divine and cosmogonic aspects of her poem (see figure 5).[40]

Proba was also fluent in classical Greek, and wrote a second cento in Greek from the works of Homer."

38 See for instance Trithemius 1494, 28^{v}; Köbel (Oppenheim 1517 [1514]) 1; da Sienna 1566, 459; Comparetti 1997 (1885), 53–54; Ermini 1909, 99–100. This aspect continues to be stressed, e.g. Clark 1983, 165; Kyriakidis 1992, 122–123; Badini and Rizzi 2011, 62 ("conosce perfettamente Virgilio").

39 Par. fr. 598, *a.* 1403, 143^{v}; New York, NYPL Spencer collection 33, late 15th century, 64^{v}; London, BL, Royal 16 GV, *a.* 1440, 113^{v}; London, BL, Royal 20 C V, 15th century, 147^{v}. The portrayal of a female author or scrive is not very common in medieval French mansucripts, see Gathercole 2000, 29. The portrait of Proba as a young scribe with several books in front of her is also found in the Augustinian monk Giacomo Filippo Forèsti da Bergamo's (1434–1520) updated version of *De claris mulieribus* dedicated to the queen of Hungary and Bohemia *De claris selectisque mulieribus*, Forèsti 1497, cxxix.

40 Par. fr. 599, 15th–16th century, 83^{r}. On this manuscript and Louise de Savoie, see Brown 2011, 108, 113–116.

Boccaccio's biography of Proba later played an important role in the *querelle des femmes*, the debate about the intellectual capabilities of women that gained impetus in Christine de Pisan's (1364–1430) critique of the Roman de la rose, written by Guillaume de Lorris (fl. 13th century) in the first half of the thirteenth century and expanded by Jean de Meun (c. 1240–1305) in the second. In her *City of Ladies*, she presented a critique of cultural misogyny through an allegorical vision in which the Ladies Reason, Right and Justice instruct the narrator to build a *City of Ladies*. Many women that inhabit the City are drawn from Boccaccio's examples, reproducing—at least in the case of Proba—some peculiarities in the French translation of Boccaccio's work from 1401.[41] But there are also direct modifications, such as Boccaccio's presentation of Proba as an illustrious exception among women that should be a role model for idle women. This is excluded in Pisan's account, which emphasizes instead that no man could surpass Proba in a project of this sort. She adds that Proba obviously must have composed many literary works that have gone lost, even though the *Cento* alone contains a lifetime worth of learning. As in Petrarch and Boccaccio, a Homeric cento is included among these works:

> Un entre les autres en fist en vers appellé aussi Centomie pour la cause de cent vers qui y sont contenus. Et prist les dis de Omerus le poete et les vers, par quoy on peut conclure a la louange d'icelle que non pas tant seulement les letres latines savoit, mais aussi les grecques sceut parfaitement.
>
> One among the rest that she composed in verse was also entitled *Cento*, because of the hundred (*centum*) verses that are contained in it.[42] She took the expressions and verses from the poet Homer; from this one can conclude to her praise that she not only knew Latin literature but also knew Greek perfectly.
>
> *City of Ladies*, ed. RICHARDS and CARAFFI [2003] 158, transl. ZIOLKOWSKI and PUTNAM [2008] 147

These representations of Proba as an intellectual remained important in the feminist debates in Italy and France of the following centuries. The very existence of this female author proved that it was possible to reconcile classical

41 See ed. and transl. in Baroin and Haffen 1993, 149–152.

42 This was falsely suggested in the first french translation of Boccaccio (see in ed. Baroin and Haffen 1993, 150) and later corrected by Giraldi 1545, 107.

erudition (Virgil), the notion of traditional female arts and craft (the patchwork technique), and Christian faith (the Bible) (pp. 101–108). In this strain, Martin le Franc (c. 1410–1461) mentions Proba in his *The Trial of Womankind* (1441–1442), a work in which the protagonist, the Champion of Ladies alias 'Free Will' (Franc Vouloir), defends woman against Jean de Meun and 'Badmouth' (Malebouche). 'Free Will' commends Proba and tells us that her *Cento* was so good that she must have been inspired by the Holy Spirit like the evangelists, and that she equalled Virgil in courage.[43] In one manuscript containing this work, Proba is depicted seated at a desk with one book only, holding a pen in her right hand and a knife in her left (figure 6); ready, as Helen Swift believes, to erase the words of Virgil and replace them with her own.[44] In another image she stands with Virgil between two representations of the Church and the Synagogue, pointing the pagan poet to the Church (figure 7).[45] In a third manuscript she stands next to the protagonist Franc Vouloir, waving to Virgil who is seated in a basket suspended from a window in a tower (figure 8).[46] This alludes to the medieval legend according to which Virgil fell in love with the Emperor's daughter and arranged a nocturnal meeting with her. The poet was to reach her chamber by being hoisted up in a basket, but the princess left him hanging halfway and at dawn people saw the poet and ridiculed him. Virgil took his revenge by magically making it so that no fire could be lit in the city, except for in the genitals of the Emperor's daughter.[47] This popular legend appears in the second book of the *The Trial of Womankind* (vv. 6097–6120), but not in connection to Proba. It has been argued that the story is alluded to in order to discredit Virgil and establish Proba as his superior,[48] but this legend is not merely a tale of the Roman poet as a fool in love, but also as a mysteriously powerful magician. Accordingly, we could alternatively regard the basket as a neutral iconographic attribute of Virgil that does not necessarily place him hierarchically below Proba.

These visual biographical representations of Proba are interestingly three or four times removed from the *Cento* itself via Boccaccio, and so their focal point is the very concept of a woman rewriting and interacting with a male authority. Virgil is always present, either in person in visual allegories of cen-

43 Le Franc, ed. and transl. S.M. Taylor 2005, 124–125 (verses 3753–3768).

44 Grenoble, Bibliothèque Municipale, 352, *a.* 1470, 373^{v}; cf. Swift 2008, 77–78.

45 Par. fr. 12476, *a.* 1451, 112^{r}; cf. Swift 2008, 77.

46 Par. fr. 841, *c. a.* 1470, 131^{v}; cf. Swift 2008, 76–77.

47 Le Franc in ed. Deschaux 1999, 79–80 (verses 6097–6120); cf. Spargo 1934, 50, 136–197; Ziolkowski and Putnam 2008, 457–463.

48 Swift 2008, 76–77.

tonic intertextuality, or represented by a codex in depictions of Proba in the act of composing her work. Proba's biography thus becomes a powerful *exemplum* in this feminist debate. This is also the case in Jean Bouchet's (1476–1550) defense of women in *The Temple of the Well Renown*,[49] where her act of Christianizing Virgil is stressed (like other figures in his text she speaks from beyond the grave):

> Puis vy Proba soubz ung tumbeau d'argille,
> Qui feit extraict des metres de Virgille,
> Les adaptans, comme on veoit par escript,
> Aux treshaulx faictz du saulveur Jhesucrist.
>
> Then I saw Proba under a grave of mud | who took extracts from Virgil's meters | and by adapting them, as one can see in the writing, | to the high acts of the Saviour Jesus Christ
>
> *The Temple* 4135–4138, ed. BELLATI [1992] 341

Her virtue lies in the 'adaptation' of Virgil's verses to the Christian truth. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the textual relationship with the Roman poet played an important role in conceptualizations of Proba in other contexts as well. In a fifteenth century manuscript containing the *Cento* and the works of Virgil, a marginal decoration demonstrates the importance of this connection: Proba and Virgil are depicted in two triangular areas, one placed above the other, both with scrolls in their hands and laurel in their hair (figure 9).[50] Another such image is found in Simon de Luere's edition of the *Cento* from 1512, reprinted by Tacuino in 1513 and 1522 (figure 10).[51] In the distance, the city of Rome is depicted with the Tiber flowing through it. In the foreground, on the left, Proba is portrayed as seated at a desk in the act of writing; on her right, there is an allegorical meeting between the centonist and the laurelled Virgil. This double dramatization of the act of writing the *Cento* is notable, and its placement in Rome presents it as an epitome of Christian *Romanitas*.

Conceptualizations of Proba's biographical person also feed into that of Virgil. In his *Vita Vergilii*, the Italian humanist Sicco Polenton (c. 1375/6–1447) rejected the portrayals of Virgil as a magician and presented him instead as an authority through the virtue of his poetry and his being a good Roman. His

49 See ed. Bellati 1992, 103–104, 106.

50 Vicenza, Biblioteca Civica Bertoliana, 507, 221^r, see Marchioli et al. 2007, 110–111.

51 Cf. Cazes 1998, 318.

influence is one of his greatest merits, including "those who seemed poets, and learned poets at that" who "ascribed to Maro poems that had been thought out and written not by him, but by themselves." One of these were Proba: "foremost in her age for chastity, erudition, and respectability" and to honor her "singular praise and excellence" she had received the nickname Centona.[52] Polenton recycles Boccaccio's encomium, and the fact that Virgil has such an imitator indirectly enhances his status. Boccaccio's biography also finds its way into various historiographical and encyclopedic works. One example of this is the German historian and occultist Johannes Trithemius (c. 1462–1516), who states that Proba was inflamed by a desire for knowledge and that she raised herself above her sex due to her erudition when she wrote her incredible work "with the Greek name Virgiliocento".[53]

An exception to these detached restatements of Boccaccio's work is found in Jacob Köbel's preface to his edition of the *Cento* in an updated reprint of Barbieri's *Discordantiae* from 1517, in which Boccaccio's narrative is expanded and modified through a reading of the text itself. In his response to the initial question—"What kind of woman is this Proba?"—Köbel first describes her excellent education in Greek and Latin letters, sacred and profane. She knew the works of Virgil by heart and was educated in Christian religion, which she practiced through faith and the sacraments. He then adds that the poet had previously wasted her talent on celebrating princes or tyrants of her own time—paraphrasing the preface of the *Cento*—but later regretted this and turned to sacred history and a new source of inspiration instead (pp. 114–117).[54] Köbel includes the images of the Sibyls and Proba from Riessinger's 1482 edition of Barbieri's work, but the new woodcuts are slightly less classicizing: Proba stands not between pillars but curtains, and no codices lay at her feet (figure 11). At the end of the edition when the poet turns to her "sweet husband" there are also two medallions, one with the image of Proba and one with her husband Adelphius (figure 12). But this sort of direct biographical reading of the *Cento* is rare, and for the most part, the historical person Proba is constructed by expanding preexistent narratives.

In his French translation of the *Cento*, dedicated to Marguerite of France (1523–1574), Richard Le Blanc (c. 1510–1574) echoed Martin le Franc when

52 See transl. in Ziolkowski and Putnam 2008, 341–342; Scaliger repeats this idea of Proba's nickname in *Poetices Libri Septem* 1594 (1561), 1.43. See also Salden 1688, 165. Cf. Cazes 1998, 72–73.

53 Trithemius 1494, f. 28^{v}; cf. Cazes 1998, 76–77.

54 Köbel (Oppenheim 1517 [1514]), 1–3; cf. Cazes 1998, 331–334.

stating that Proba had a "spirit surpassing human capacity" and Jean Bouchet when praising her for "putting Virgil's verses in order".[55] Towards the end of the sixteenth century, the representations of Proba became more varied. She was offered as a model to emulate for the student Samuel Pellican, the addressee in the preface of Conrad Lycosthène's edition from 1546. This holy woman, he argued (using a conventional simile), composed her pious work like a bee, detaching one verse here and one hemistich there, assembling them and putting them together so correctly and carefully that only someone who had spent years reading Virgil would detect the joints of the fragments and the sutures of the verses.[56] To a certain extent, the general focus shifted from her personal piety and her learning and association with divinely inspired prophets to her poetic skills: she was idolized as the second Sappho, "the Latin Sappho of the Christians".[57] As her centonic method became an object of imitation, the representations of the author followed: The Parisian printer and classical scholar Henri Estienne (1528–1598) compared Proba to the Amazon queen Penthesileia, who had the courage to fight against men (*A* 4.93–94), and he declared that he would rival this woman like no man had done before (a matter that in itself added to her glory).[58] A growing literary 'intimacy' with the *Cento* thus inherently destabilized the privileged position allotted to the text by authors who had been distant from the text it self, such as Christine de Pisan. As a Christian imitator of Virgil, Proba becomes, in a sense, 'one of us'. Catherine (Fradonnet) des Roches (c. 1542–1587) mentions Proba in a dialogue between the allegorical characters 'Gentle' (Placide) and 'Severe' (Sévère) in their discussion about the upbringing of their daughters Pasithée and Iris in 1583. Gentle represents progressive views on women and education, and his ideals are inspired by the ideas of Juan Luis Vives (c. 1492–1540) and Erasmus of Rotterdam (c. 1469–1536), whereas Severe plays the part of an uninformed merchant. Halfway through the dialogue, Gentle declares that he wants his daughter to be shaped by the "excellent Ladies" and their "illustrious virtues". Severe replies: "Like those Sibyls who gained renown in the past!" No, Gentle answers, not like Sibyls such as Eumetis, Arete, Eudoxia, Theodora, but the young woman should read "Siega, Laura Terracina, Morata Olympia, Ippolita Torella, Proba and Clémence Isaure". Here, Proba (and the legend of Clémence Isaure) is included among contemporary female authors,

55 Le Blanc (Paris 1553), 2, 4.

56 Lycosthène (Basel 1546), 1^{r}; cf. Cazes 1998, 106–108.

57 da Sienna 1566, 459.

58 Estienne 1575, 95.

not the ancient Sibyls and prophets.[59] These metastases of 'Proba'—the Christian Sibyl, the Virgilian scholar, the diligent bee, the brave Penthesileia, the second Sappho, the modern imitative author—all these constructions often lived their own life, quite independently of the *Cento* itself, as the same basic biographical attributes were repeated, varied and recontextualized to serve different purposes. One such attribute that became increasingly important was Boccaccio's suggestion that Proba came from the municipality Orte.[60] This idea was circulating in 1427, as we see in a manuscript that was written by the humanist Geminiano Inghirami (c. 1371–1460), who claimed that Proba died in Orte (Rome, Biblioteca Casanatense, 386, *a.* 1427). It is also found later in the preface of the editor Giulio Roscio, who came from Orte himself and argued strongly in favor of this theory celebrating his countrywoman:[61]

> Insignis citharâ celebretur Lesbia Sappo,
>   Claruit et doctâ quaeque puella lyrâ.
> Tu tamen emineas cunctis, Falconia, per quam
>   Hortanum priscâ relligione viget.
> Cypridis insanos aliae cecinere furores,
>   Et damnata Orco numina falsa Deûm.
> Tu rerum artificem canis, auctoremque salutis,
>   Quaeque vetus scribit pagina, quaeque nova.

> Let famous Sappho of Lesbos be praised with the cithara, | as well as any other girl who has won fame through her learned lyre. | But you, Falconia, you excel them all, through whom | Orte thrives with the ancient religion. | Other women sang of Cypris' raging madness | and of false deities condemned to Orcus. | You sing of the Creator of the universe and of our Saviour; | that which the old page writes, and the new.
>
> ROSCIO and GRANA (Rome 1588) 6

The epigram as well as Roscio's thesis about Proba's origin was repeated and confirmed in later editions.[62]

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59 See transl. in Larsen 2006, 226–229.

60 Roscio (Rome 1588), 3; Meibom in a note at the end of his edition under the heading *Scholia* (Helmstadt 1597), e; Fontanini 1723 (1708), 189–202; Fabricius 1868 (1734), 551–553; Barbapiccola in 1722 in Messbarger and Findlen 2005, 49.

61 Cf. Cazes 1998, 296.

62 See Meibom (Helmstadt 1597) A2^{v}. Cf. Cazes 1998, 338–339.

During the late sixteenth century, new tendencies surfaced in the critical discourse on Proba as her work started to inspire poets to produce their own Virgilian centos, occasionally publishing them together with hers.[63] With these emulations, the idealized conception of 'Proba' as an unreachable model faded and soon, there was an increasing desire to collect and organize historical facts about this biographical person. The task of inventing Proba moved from the poets to the scholars, who often had less to say about Proba's poem than about their fellow historians, confirming or rejecting their theses about the date and identity of the poet.[64] In his dissertation on the topic 'which Proba wrote the *Cento*' (pp. 20–23) from 1692, a certain Tommaso Simeoni suggested that the *Cento* was written by a third, previously unknown Proba, who was named Valeria Faltonia Proba and who lived at the same time as Anicia Faltonia Proba, a suggestion confirmed by some.[65] Scholars started to reject the possibility that Anicia Faltonia Proba could have been the centonist, since Jerome wrote so kindly about her in his letter to her granddaughter Demetrias but criticized centos in his letter to Paulinus of Nola (see chapter 2).[66] The bishop and professor Giusto Fontanini (1666–1736) followed Isidore and the inscription in the Modena manuscript reported by Montfaucon and concluded that the centonist was Faltonia Betitia Proba. Furthermore, he insisted that this Proba was a citizen of Orte as previously argued by Roscio.[67] This was often confirmed by later scholars;[68] however, a consensus was never reached, and there is some confusion about the various alternatives in the encyclopedias of the early nineteenth century:[69]

63 Plateanus (Paris 1576); reprint (Cologne 1592); Meibom (Helmstadt 1597) reprint with some newly added centos and extensive notes (Cologne 1601); cf. Cazes 1998, 48–49, 63–70, 110–114, 339–340.

64 See the development in Baronio 1601 (1589), 724–727; Glandorp 1589, 725–726; Vossius 1654, 60; Fabricius 1868 (1734), 551–553; Simeoni 1692; Oudin 1722, 900–902; Fontanini 1723 (1708), 189–202; Wolf 1735, 349–354; cf. Delepierre 1866, 67–79.

65 Simeoni 1692, 60–64; Fabricius 1868 (1734) 551–552; Delepierre (1866) 67–79.

66 Fontanini 1723 (1708), 203–207; Oudin 1722, 901.

67 Fontanini 1723 (1708), 189–202.

68 Cf. Fabricius 1868 (1734), 551–553; Wolf 1735, 349–352; Chalmers 1812–1817, 90; Rose et al. 1840, 90.

69 Cf. also Chalmers 1812–1817, 90: "Falconia Proba, a Roman poetess […] was a native of Horta, or Hortanum, in Etruria […] Authors have sometimes confounded her with Anicia Falconia Proba, the mother of three consuls: and some have said she was Valeria Proba, who was the wife of Adelfius, a Proconsul."

> Proba was a poetess, greatly admired in the middle ages, but whose real name, and the place of whose nativity, are uncertain. We find her called *Flatonia Veccia*, *Faltonia Anicia*, *Valeria Faltonia Proba*, and *Proba Valeria*; while Rome, Orta, and sundry other cities, claim the honor of her birth.
>
> SMITH (1846) 134

Faced with the contradicting data, they would capitulate and simply declare: "The accounts given in different works about Proba are so various, that it is nearly impossible to say who she was."[70] The tone was seldom negative, but the Boccaccian hyperboles were gone. For instance, Octave Delepierre (1802–1879)—a great enthusiast when it came to centos—felt obliged to correct Sisto da Sienna: "The author of our cento was called 'the Sappho of the Christians', an epithet that to me seems rather poorly chosen" ("L'auteur de notre centon fut surnommée la *Sapho latine* des Chrétiens, ce qui me paraît une épithète assez mal choisie").[71]

Everything would change with Schenkl's introduction to his critical edition of the *Cento* from 1888, in which he established the identity of the centonist based on Isidore and manuscript titles, connecting and confirming them with a biographical reading ofthe *Cento*. Through this authoritative text, 'Proba' was injected with a number of new biographical attributes that would shape readings of the poem over the century to come.

70 Bruce 1841, 231.

71 Delepierre 1866, 75.

FIGURE 1 *Proba as a young lady holding a scroll*
STOCKHOLM, ROYAL LIBRARY, BARBIERI (1481) 31v

FIGURE 2 *Proba as a Sibyl holding a scroll and a codex*
MUNICH, BAYERISCHE STAATSBIBLIOTHEK, BARBIERI (1482) 18v

SIBYLLA · CVMANA

Fuit tp̄e Tarqnii priſci ait de xp̄o. hec. teſte Virgil.
Magnᵓ ab i tegro ſecloꝝ naſcit᷑ ordo: Iã redit & uir
go redeũt ſaturnia regna: Iã noua ꝓgeies cœlo de
mittit᷑ alto. Tu mõ naſcẽti puero: quo ferrea pri-
mũ Deſinet: et toto ſurget gẽs aurea mũdo.
Caſta faue lucina. tuus iam regnat appollo.

FIGURE 3 *The Sibyl of Cumae holding a scroll and a codex*
MUNICH, BAYERISCHE STAATSBIBLIOTHEK, BARBIERI (1482) 8ᵛ

FIGURE 4 *Proba as a scholar at her writing desk*
NEW YORK, NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY, SPENCERS COLLECTION 33 (LATE 15TH C.) 64v

FIGURE 5 *Proba holding a rod pointed towards the sky*
PARIS, BIBLIOTÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE, FRA. 599 (15–16TH C.) 83R

FIGURE 6 *Proba at her desk holding a pen and a knife*
GRENOBLE, BIBLIOTÈQUE MUNICIPALE, 352 (*A*. 1470) 373^{v}

FIGURE 7 *Proba and Virgil between the Church and the Synagogue*
PARIS, BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE, FRA. 12476 (*A*. 1451) 112[R]

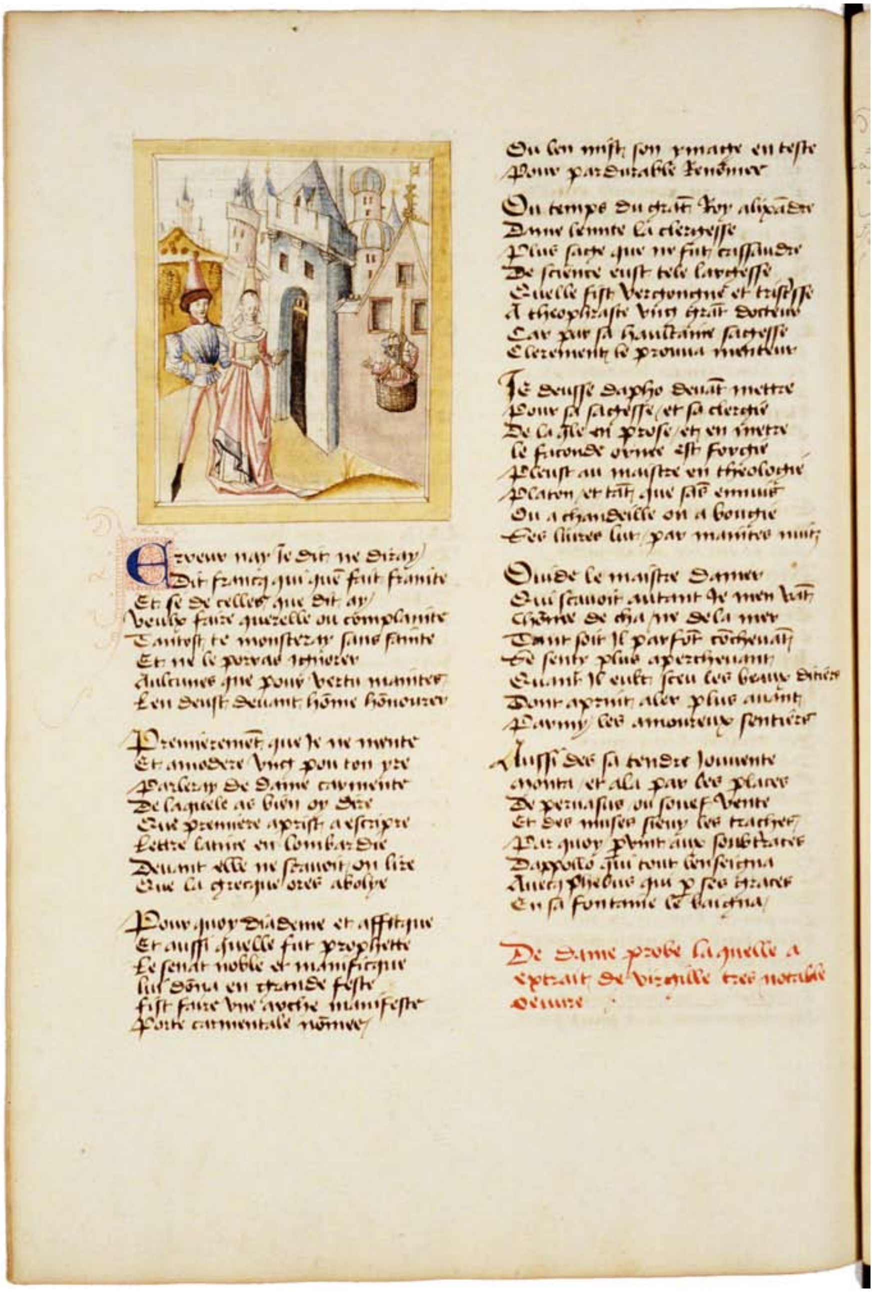
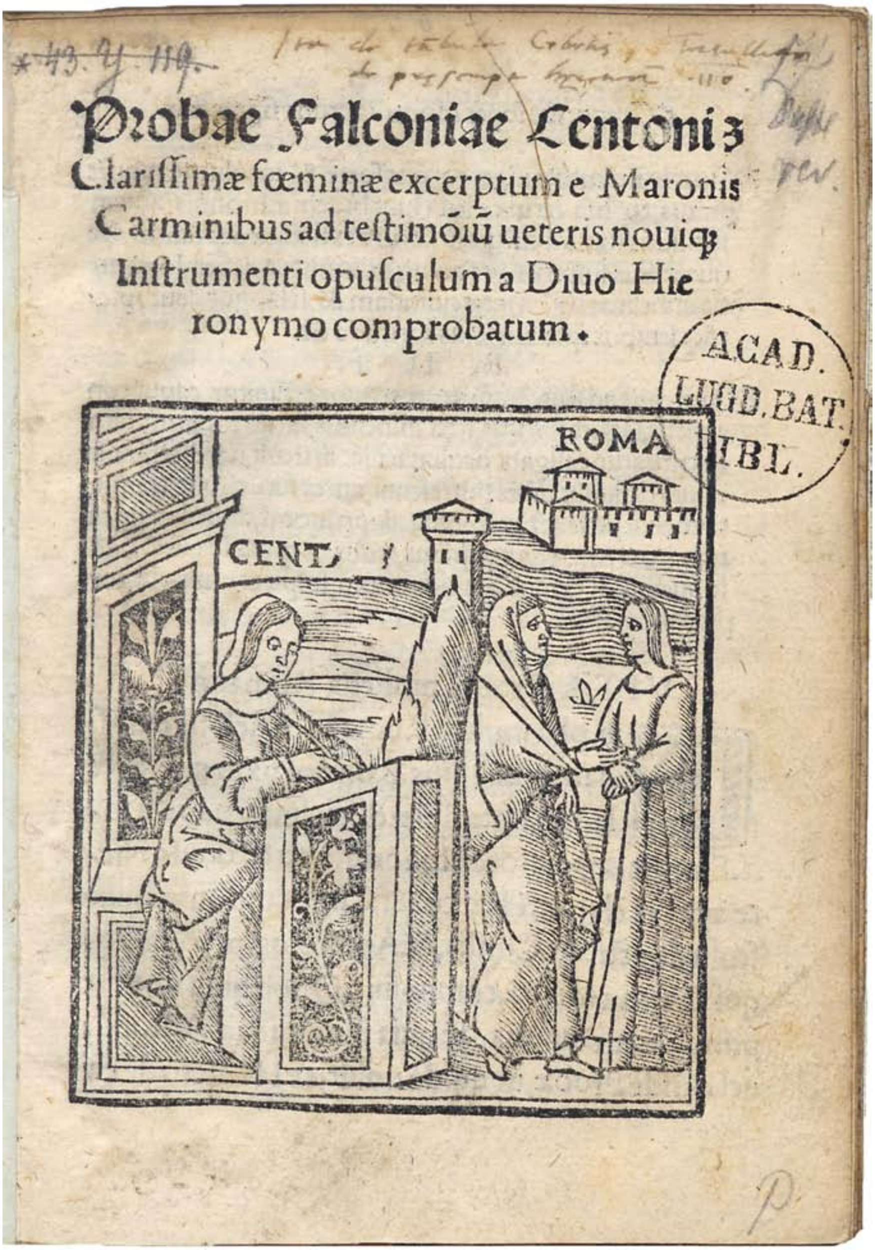


FIGURE 8 *Proba and Franc Vouloir waving to Virgil in a basket*
PARIS, BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE, FRA. 841 (*A.* 1470) 131^{v}

FIGURE 9 *Proba and Virgil with laurel in their hair*
VICENZA, BIBLIOTECA CIVICA BERTOLIANA, 507 (14–15TH C.) 221R



Probae Falconiae Centoniʒ
Clarissimæ fœminæ excerptum e Maronis
Carminibus ad testimōiū ueteris nouiq;
Instrumenti opusculum a Diuo Hie
ronymo comprobatum.

FIGURE 10 *Proba writing with Rome and Virgil in the background*
LEIDEN, UNIVERSITEITSBILIOTHEEK, TACHUINO (1513) 1R

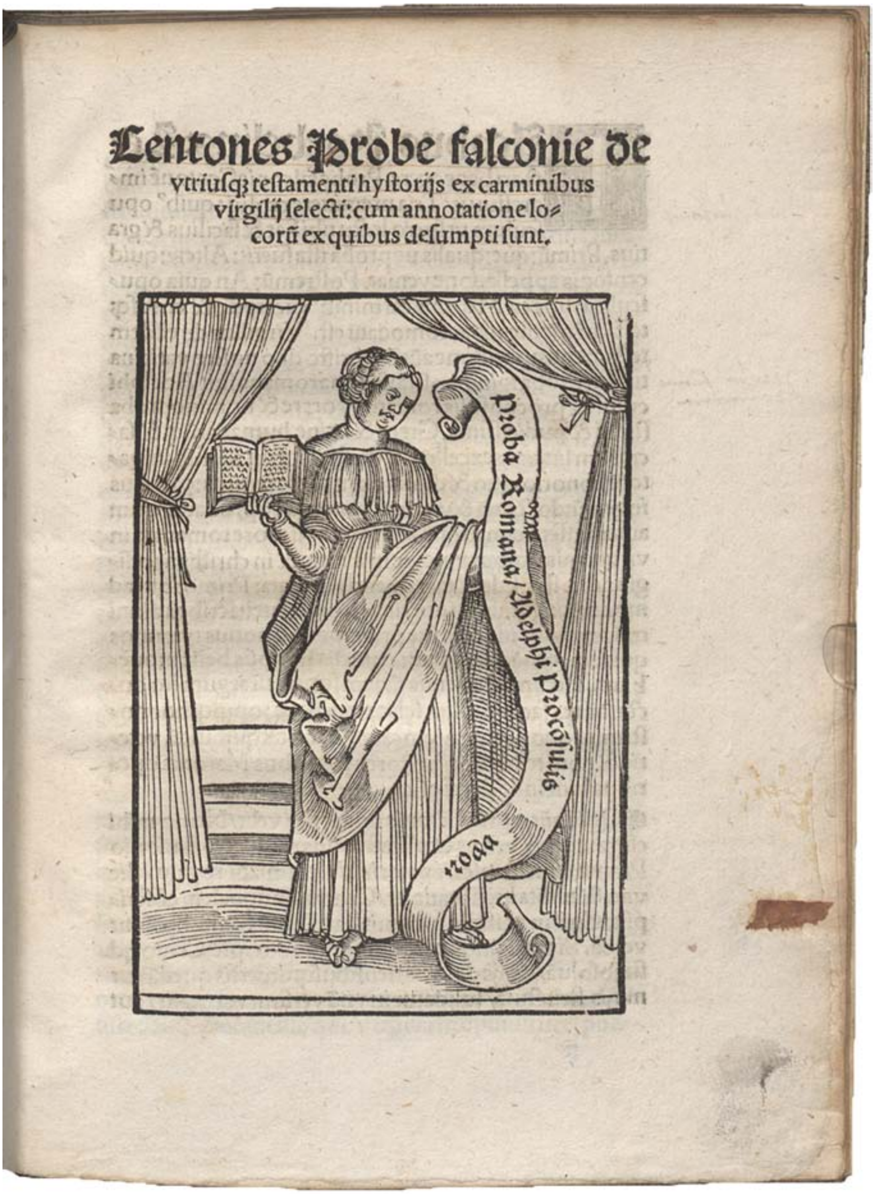
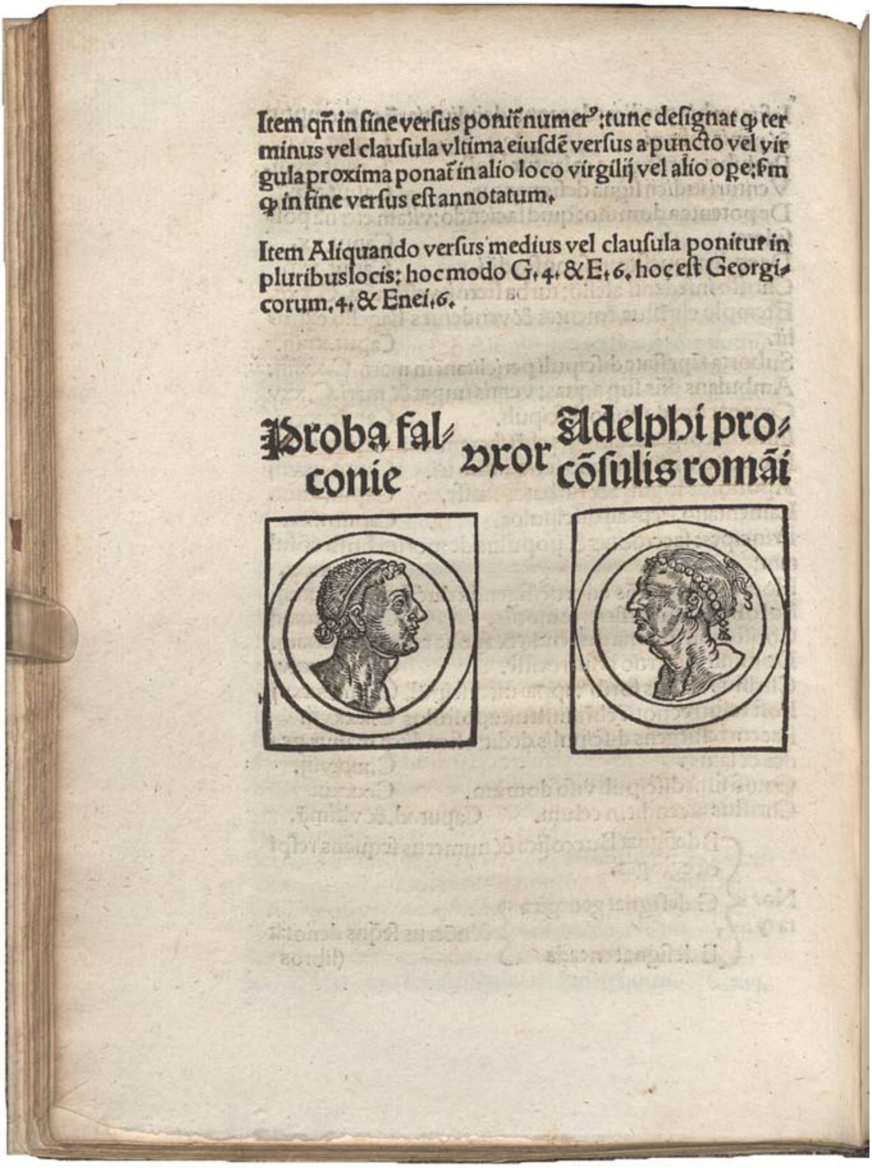


FIGURE 11 *Proba between curtains with scroll and book in her hands*
MUNICH, BAYERISCHE STAATSBIBLIOTHEEK, KÖBEL (1517) 1R



Item qn̄ in fine versus ponit̄ numerꝰ; tunc designat ꝙ ter
minus vel clausula vltima eiusdē versus a puncto vel vir
gula proxima ponat̄ in alio loco virgilij vel alio ope; fm
ꝙ in fine versus est annotatum.

Item Aliquando versus medius vel clausula ponitur in
pluribus locis; hoc modo G. 4. & E. 6. hoc est Georgi-
corum. 4. & Enei. 6.

Proba fal- conie vxor Adelphi pro- cōsulis romāi

FIGURE 12 *Medallions representing Proba and her husband Adelphius*
MUNICH, BAYERISCHE STAATSBIBLIOTHEEK, KÖBEL (1517) 4v

Proba in Modern Scholarship

In the twentieth century, constructing the historical person who penned the *Cento* was often an important objective of scholarly engagement with the text. A number of intense biographical readings resulted in new data that accumulated and made the text a more attractive object of study. The difficulties in extracting information about the person Proba made Peter Dronke exclude her from his seminal work *Women Writers of the Middle Ages* from 1984. He found her text to be "too august to reveal anything concretely about Proba herself"[72] and this kind of literacy did not fit into his view on women writers:

> The women's motivation for writing at all, for instance, seems rarely to be predominantly literary: it is often more urgently serious than is common among men writers; it is a response springing from inner needs, more than from an artistic, or didactic, inclination. There is, more often than in men's writing, a lack of apriorism, of predetermined postures: again and again we encounter attempts to cope with human problems in their singularity—not imposing rules or categories from without, but seeking solutions that are apt and truthful existentially. Hence, the women whose texts are treated here show excellingly a quality (literary, but also 'metaliterary') of immediacy: they look at themselves more concretely and more searchingly than many of the highly accomplished men writers who were their contemporaries. This immediacy can lend women's writing qualities beside which all technical flawlessness is pallid.
>
> DRONKE 1984, x

To fit Proba into this stereotype of the woman writer, driven by her 'inner needs', scholars have often argued for the value of her text by claiming that it is indeed very personal, proving their point through a series of biographical readings. An important text in this aspect has been the preface to the first critical edition of the *Cento*. One of Schenkl's hypotheses was that the *Cento* was written to instruct pagans in Christian culture, perhaps in the education of children.[73] This hypothesis developed into one of the most common biographical readings in twentieth century scholarship—that of Proba, the pious mother and wife. Basing his assumptions on the introductory verses of the poem, Schenkl concluded that Proba was probably still a pagan when she composed her ear-

72 Dronke 1984, 286, n. 69.

73 Schenkl 1888, 514–515.

lier poem on the war between Magnentius and Constantius (pp. 114–117), and then converted before she wrote the *Cento*.[74] So did Filippo Ermini, who represented the Christian *Cento* as a sort of palinode to make amends for her previous secular poem. To his mind, there is proof in the text that Proba was not a Christian from birth but converted at a late stage of her life. This is the reason, he claims, why "true faith" enlivens the divine invocations in the preface, and this display of deep Christian emotions is presented as a defence of Proba's at times "inappropriate" re-use of Virgil.[75] Ermini conceptualizes her as a fervent, pious and modest person. This image becomes difficult to reconcile with two verses in the extradiegetic prayer-like digression in the middle of the poem, where the narrator expresses the desire to be remembered for eternity:

temptanda via est, qua me quoque possim	*G* 3.8
tollere humo ¦ et nomen fama tot ferre per annos	*G* 3.9 ¦ 3.47

I must try the path along which I will be able to lift | myself above the ground and carry the name in fame for so many years.

Cento 336–337

Therefore, Ermini plays down this bold wish to the advantage of the epilogue where the narrator encourages her "comrades" and "husband" to keep commemorating Christ. The main objective of this "pious lady" was after all to keep her husband from being lured by false doctrine (Arianism, according to Ermini) so that their innocent grandchildren remain "pure":

I decus, i, nostrum, ¦ tantarum gloria rerum,	*A* 6.546 ¦ 4.232 etc.
et nos et tua dexter adi pede sacra secundo	*A* 8.302
annua, quae differre nefas. celebrate faventes	*A* 8.173
hunc, socii, morem sacrorum, hunc ipse teneto,	*A* 3.408
o dulcis coniunx, ¦ et si pietate meremur,	*A* 2.777 ¦ 2.690
hac casti maneant in religione nepotes.	*A* 3.409

Go forward, our pride! Go forward, glory of great deeds, | come to us and your sacred annual rites with auspicious steps, | which must not be postponed. Comrades, celebrate | honoring this sacred custom! You, my

74 Schenkl 1888, 514.

75 Ermini 1909, 17–18, 70–71, 99–102, 158; cf. also Moricca 1928, 852–853; Worth 2007, 66.

> sweet husband, | maintain it! And, if we deserve it through our devotion, | our descendants will also remain chaste in this sacred worship.
>
> *Cento* 689–694

These verses have been interpreted by some as a reference to Easter,[76] and to the Ascension by others, starting with Ermini.[77] According to this scholar, the reason why this feast is alluded to in the *Cento* is also biographical: Proba held the Ascension particularly dear, he guesses, since she was baptized in connection to this feast.[78]Although Ermini stresses that the allusion is vague and that further speculation about the intentions of the poet would be useless,[79] he continues to deliver further biographical constructions: Proba's reference to Musaeus (*Cento* 37; pp. 127–128) shows that she yearned for the Greek bard's knowledge, as did all learned men who dedicated themselves to philosophy rather than works about heroic deeds. When the narrator expresses a wish "to disclose lofty matters buried in earth and mist" (51 ~ *A* 6.267), Ermini takes this ambition literally and deplores that the restrictions of the cento-form held back the "generous Christian feelings in the heart of this woman".[80]

That Faltonia Betitia Proba was a deeply religious person who led a pure, devout life has often been the main conclusion in readings of the *Cento*. Zoja Pavlovskis called it a "labor of love" by a "highly pious" woman who "loved the Classics".[81] In Elizabeth Clark's and Diana Hatch's monograph on Proba from 1981, Proba's selection of verses provide us with a "clue" to her personal opinions on issues such as family and asceticism. Despite the highly polyphonic nature of this text they are determined to extract information about the inner life of the author, concluding that she cherished traditional family values and virtues such as "marital fidelity, brotherly affection, and respect for parents".[82] Elsewhere, Clark states that although asceticism had not yet won the day when Proba's *Cento* was composed, "we may imagine that she might have been among those who were shocked to hear of aristocratic women abandoning their homes

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76 Shanzer 1994, 91–96; Green 2008, 372–374.

77 Ermini 1909, 17–18; Clark and Hatch 1981, 126; Schnapp 1992, 109; Sivan 1993, 149.

78 Ermini 1909, 17–18.

79 Ermini 1909, 18.

80 Ermini 1909, 71, 99: "Ma dove la qualità dell'artificio doveva soffocare o estinguere il generoso sentimento cristiano nel cuore della donna, questo s'è conservato segretamente quando la frase tiranna ne ha impedito l'espressione, e avviva come fuoco nascosto i versi aridi e grevi." Cf. Morrica 1928, 858–859.

81 Pavlovskis 1989, 79.

82 Clark and Hatch 1981, 121.

and children, such as Jerome's friend, Paula, and Melania the Elder did a decade or two later."[83] It is noted "No abandonment of children and husbands, no haircloth shirts, no adaptation of voluntary indigence are recommended in its [the *Cento's*] lines."[84] But what place would this have in a retelling of *Genesis* and the Gospels? Proba is seen as a conservative aristocratic matron who did not support asceticism:

> Rigorous asceticism was not for all; the life of marriage and family could be applauded even by Christians in an era when most of the laurels went to those like Proba's great-great-granddaughter, Demetrias, who as an adolescent renounced the goods of the world for the riches of Christ.
>
> CLARK and HATCH 1981, 121

Instead, Proba's main concern was "that Christians adopt correct domestic values", which is "revealed both in her frequent use of Virgilian lines" and "in her own explicitly stated version of Christian teaching".[85] For instance, the narrator's exclamation *horresco referens* (*Cento* 287 ~ *A* 2.204) on Cain and Abel is a sign of particular *personal* aversion to fratricide[86] and she consciously described the first meeting between Adam and Eve as a romantic or even erotic encounter, which shows that she had a positive view on human sexuality.[87] The focus on Christ's infancy reflects Proba's motherly interests and the re-use of verses dealing with married couples in the Virgilian texts reveals that she worshiped her husband.[88]

As for Ermini, finding out the personal sentiments of Faltonia Betitia Proba was an important reason to study the text for Clark and Hatch, but where the centonic method represented a restraining factor for Ermini,[89] Clark and Hatch regarded it as a particularly revealing medium since Proba's opinions perme-

83 Clark 1986, 141.

84 Clark 1986, 145.

85 Quotation from Clark and Hatch 1981, 111; cf. Clark 1986, 141–145; Worth 2007, 66; Badini and Rizzi 2011, 67; Cooper 2013, 144.

86 Clark and Hatch 1981, 111, n. 21, 204.

87 Clark and Hatch 1981, 111, 190 n. 19; Stevenson 2005, 67; Badini and Rizzi 2011, 166–167: "she considered sexuality in a substantially positive way" ("ella consideri la sessualità in maniera sostanzialmente positiva"); Curran 2012, 335; cf. Witke 1971, 198. Cf also the translation of Reedy 1981, 49: "he embraced her, took her hand, and clung to her in love" (*excepitque manu dextramque amplexus inhaesit*, 135).

88 Clark and Hatch 1981, 114–118.

89 Ermini 1909, 99. Cf. Cariddi 1971, 81–85.

ate the selection of verses. This opposition between personal/intentional and random often comes into focus in discussions on the *Cento*, as we can see, for instance, in Badini and Rizzi's recent commentary on the poem. They reject the view that the *Cento* is a mechanical and artificial product, and instead stress that it reflects "a personal selection" of Virgilian verses.[90] In these discussions, we get the impression that the literary value of the *Cento* is completely dependent on whether or not we can construe the opinions of a coherent 'author'. In the last decade, this image of Proba as a loving wife and mother was expanded and new biographical readings of the text were added to the old; time after time, this collectively produced narrative has been presented as historical truth.[91] The greeting to her "sweet husband" (*dulcis coniunx*, 693) in the epilogue, where the narrator asks him to remain pious so that their descendants will not abandon the religion (*Cento* 693–694), often serves as proof that Proba exhorted him to convert: "Her husband apparently tolerated his wife's new faith, and by the time of his death he, too, was converted."[92] So even if there were reasons to doubt that Proba penned the *Cento* to educate her children, it was still a family project: "If Proba is not thinking of a readership of children, she is at the very least thinking of a readership of parents."[93] One possibility has been to combine the two and take it as proof that her husband was responsible for the education of their children.[94]

In an age when Roman culture was changing and views on gender and the family reconfigured, Proba was apparently an island of traditionalism and conservatism. As one scholar puts it: "there is nothing here to indicate that she thought other than along the most conservative of gendered lines."[95] But such indications could certainly be found in the complex polyphony of the *Cento*, a text that in many ways undermines traditional binary oppositions such as

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90 Badini and Rizzi 2011, 62.

91 Salisbury 2001, 288; Kaczynski 2002, 132; Stevenson 2005, 66–67; Cooper 2007, 65–67; Worth 2007, 66; Badini and Rizzi 2011, 68–69.

92 Quotation from Salzman 1990, 229. Cf. Clark and Hatch 1981, 101; Kastner and Millin 1981, 40–41; Kaczynski 2002, 132; Harrington 1997, 112.

93 Quotation from Cooper 2007, 66; cf. Kastner and Millin 1981, 40–41; Cooper 2013, 145.

94 Sandnes 2011, 148: "The husband is addressed as being responsible for the instruction of the children in his house, thus keeping them in faith: *maneant in religione nepotes*. This educational role of the poem finds substantiation in Proba's exhortation to more attentive listening to the poem, which closes the proem in l. 54–55."

95 Quotation from Kuefler 2001, 292; cf. also Clark and Hatch 1981, 111–112; Curran 2000, 283–284; Margoni-Kögler 2001, 134–137; Cooper 2007, 65–68; Hunter 2007, 68–72; Badini and Rizzi 2011, 67.

male–female, divine–human, pagan–Christian, since Christ, Mary and God are constructed with verses that describe both male and female heroes and divinities (see chapter 6). But these elements are generally overlooked since they cannot be integrated into the pre-existing dominating biographical constructions of Proba. She is a mother, teacher and wife rather than intellectual and poetic virtuosa.[96] Instead of interpreting the *Cento* as a literary text with all the complexities that this entails, it is read as "the typical woman's response to Christianity in the fourth century", in which Proba "combined traditional womanly aristocratic values—namely, filial devotion, domestic harmony, and family reputation—with the message of Christianity."[97] This focus on the poet's hypothetical personal motives and intentions tends to blur what we do know about the *Cento*: it was a literary work by a woman poet who inserted it into the male-dominated epic tradition, and a poem that rewrites what was considered the most important work in this canon. But instead of reading Proba as a poet, it has commonly been argued that she assumed the role of a teacher and intended the *Cento* to be read and studied by children at an elementary level, an idea that goes back to the old hypothesis that Proba composed her *Cento* to teach her sons about Christianity.[98] The line of argument behind this thesis is as follows:

(1) In 1929, Aurelio Amatucci suggested that the *Cento* was written as a reaction to the decree of Julian (362), in which he forbade Christians

96 Thus Kastner and Millin 1981, 41, 42: "Her concern was education and the task of what she seemed to consider a simple story simply."; "The success of Proba's cento as a school text has already been noted. In this fact alone lies the strength of her credentials as a lay woman who wrote a theological work and served as a teacher. Her place as an artist of Latin literature is less secure as her work leaves much to be desired in the matter of style." Cf. also Stevenson 2005, 66 on the topic of the "lost epic" on the battle at Mursa: "but by no strech of the imagination can this be regarded as a 'feminine' subject. It is more relevant to remember that she was the daughter of a great aristocratic family, and that her own province of Italy suffered particularly heavily from the conflict. In the Cento itself, Proba transcends her apparently self-imposed training as an epic poet by moving to a Christian subject, […]"

97 Quotation from Salzman 2002, 163; cf. Hunter 2007, 71, n. 74.

98 de Labriolle 1920, 430; Amatucci 1955 (1929), 227; Ermini 1960, 197; Clark and Hatch 1981, 98–100; Clark 1986, 145; Salzman 1990, 229; Green 1995, 554–560; Salisbury 2001, 288; Meconi 2004, 112–113; Stevenson 2005, 67–68; Warner 2005, 137; Stirling 2005, 146; Cooper 2007, 65–66; Sandnes 2011, 143; Badini and Rizzi 2011, 44; Curran (2012, 338) adds: "and of course, with Virgil the staple of a literary education for children generally, girls too."

to teach rhetoric, but that Proba still wanted to teach her own sons the biblical story.[99] Many later scholars endorsed this thesis.[100]

(2) The imperial dedication that precedes the *Cento* in a few manuscripts ends with an exhortation to Arcadius: "Read it yet again, preserve it for a long time and hand it over to the younger | Arcadius, and may he do the same to his offspring. May your | august descent always assume it and teach it to their own" (*Haec relegas servesque diu tradasque minori | Arcadio, haec ille suo semini, haec tua semper | accipiat doceatque suos augusta propago*).[101]

(3) In Clark and Hatch's monograph *The Golden Bough and the Oaken Cross*, they noted that verses reflecting traditional Roman family values often occur in the *Cento*, and saw this as proof that Proba addresses children, perhaps even her own sons.[102]

(4) The *Cento* is found listed along with other early Latin Christian poems in the curricula of Carolingian monastery schools in the ninth century (see pp. 89–91). Schenkl therefore concluded that mainly young students read the *Cento* in the early Middle Ages,[103] and Ermini adopted this view, supposing that it became a popular schooltext immediately after its composition and never went out of fashion as such.[104]

These indicia, however, do not prove that the *Cento* was intended exclusively for young students.[105] No ancient testimony put the centos in relation to education, and none of the church historians who inform us about Julian's decree mention Christian centos.[106]

The imperial dedication has sometimes been attributed to Sedulius and is found in connection to his works in at least ten manuscripts,[107] a text that has also been considered as a reaction to Julian's decree. However, as Carl Springer

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99 Amatucci 1955 (1929) 227.

100 Clark and Hatch 1981, 98–100; Kastner and Millin 1981, 35; Wilson 1991, 1009; Green 1995, 554–559; Salisbury 2001, 288; Meconi 2004, 112–113, 114–116; Stevenson 2005, 66–67; Warner 2005, 137; Cooper 2007, 65–66; Sandnes 2011, 143; Badini and Rizzi 2011, 44; Cooper 2013, 145.

101 Clark and Hatch 1981, 106; Stevenson 2005, 67–68; Cooper 2007, 66, n. 28.

102 Clark and Hatch 1981, 111–112.

103 Schenkl 1888, 515–517.

104 Ermini 1960, 197–198.

105 See Green 1995, 560.

106 Jensen 1996, 53.

107 Springer 1995, 15–16.

notes: “we have no hard evidence” to prove that “Sedulius intended his poem to be read by school children”.[108] As we should expect from any classical poet, both Sedulius and Proba compose in the spirit of teaching and pleasing—*docere* and *delectare*—yet with some emphasis on *docere,* which is a typical feature of early Christian Latin poetry.[109] But whereas Proba’s male colleagues are read against the background of this tradition, the didactic aspects of Proba’s text brand it as a school text for children.

Summary and Conclusions

The construction of ‘Proba’ has gone through a number of metamorphoses over the centuries, always influenced by and with implications for how the poem was read. The narrator’s self-fashioning as a prophet in the preface is mirrored in the early modern reception where Proba in certain contexts is represented as a Christan Sibyl in mystic connection with Virgil. Instead, leading humanists like Boccaccio expressed admiration of her intellect, erudition and mnemonic skills. This view of Proba as an learned woman and her *Cento* as a monument to the intellectual potential of women is reproduced visually in several Latin and French manuscripts of Boccaccio’s *Famous Women* where the poet is depicted as a scholar at her writing table, surrounded by numerous books. This conception was often replicated in the subsequent centuries. After her peak in popularity in the sixteenth century, when writers and editors glorified her as the Amazon queen Penthesileia and a second Sappho, the task of constructing ‘Proba’ passed to scholars working with historiography and prosopography, but a consensus was never really reached. An important development occurred when Karl Schenkl combined various pieces of external evidence with a biographical reading of the poem in the introduction to his critical edition of the *Cento* from 1888. His statements were repeatedly reproduced and affirmed and had a massive impact on readings of the author and her poem in the century to come (not unlike the role played by Boccaccio’s statements five hundred years earlier). The strong interest in the biographical person Proba and her authorial intentions increased during this period and since information provided by external sources was scarce and unreliable, her poem was often treated as a document from which one could extract biographical data. Despite the literary polyphony of her text, it was used to construct the

108 Springer 1988, 34–35.

109 Cf. Herzog 1979; den Boeft 2007, 88–90.

personality of the poet and the typical woman's response to Christianity in the fourth century. The *Cento* was defined as pedagogical endeavor, or as a family project, composed by a caring mother and wife who wished that her family members would become pious Christians like herself. This idea appears to be related to the author's gender, which promts us to return to the aforementioned comparison with the great Lesbian poet (p. 31). Sappho was famously envisioned as a schoolmistress by Friedrich Gottlieb Welcker in *Sappho Liberated from a Prevailing Prejudice* (1816), followed among others by Wilamovitz in *Sappho and Simonides* (1913). This construction of Sappho, clearly permeated by German idealism and nineteenth-century sexual ethics, has been thoroughly critizised in late twentieth-century scholarship. But wheras the notion of Sappho as a boarding school teacher was subjected to systematic interrogation, the pious and well-meaning but clumsy and naïve Proba of late nineteenth-century philology keeps getting reasserted. There are good reasons to proceed with a greater measure of self-criticism and epistemological modesty when ascribing such attributes to this historical person and emplotting her biography.[110]

110 "Classicist experience a *horror vacui* (especially of biographical data) perhaps more strongly than others and few have been able to resist the temptation to fill in the blanks. Every age creates its own Sappho. [...] She is recreated in each age to serve the interests of all who appropriate her, whether friend or enemy. We, of course, are going the same. All we can hope to do is be as little blind as we can be to what evidence there is and explicitly to acknowledge the limitations of our knowledge and the bases for our assumptions." Parker 1993, 312.

CHAPTER 2

Proba and Her Critics

It is commonly believed that the reason why centonic poetry has tended to be ignored in modern literary histories is its low status from the late eighteenth century and onwards, when imitation had to stand back for artistic ideals of originality and literary autonomy.[1] This model of explanation does not seem entirely accurate. Some critical voices were raised in the nineteenth century, but it was not until the twentieth century that rejections of centos became commonplace in classical studies, presented as the zenith of the "degeneration of poetry to pedantry" in late antiquity.[2] This branch of the reception of the *Cento*, which is grounded in a dismissive attitude towards the poem, differs in many ways from that based on a more sympathetic assessment. Therefore, I will divide my study according to these modes of reading Proba, beginning in this chapter with negative responses to her work and continuing with positive in the next.

Proba and Jerome

One text that has had a greater impact than any other on sentiments and conceptions in modern critical discourse concerning Proba's contemporary readers is a letter by Jerome addressed to Paulinus of Nola. In this text, Jerome compares the works of incompetent biblical exegetes to Virgilian and Homeric centos. He quotes three different Virgilian verses and comments that just because Virgil wrote "Now the virgin returns as well as the Saturnian reign. Now a new generation descends from heaven on high" (*E* 4.6–7), it is ridiculous to think that Virgil was a "Christian without Christ" (*Christianus sine Christo*).[3] Nor is it sound to believe that the sacred words that God addressed to his son were represented in the *Aeneid* (1.664) when Venus turned to Cupid saying: "Son,

1 Herzog and Schmidt 1993, 388; Kaczynski 2002, 135; Verweyen and Witting 1991, 174; Carbone 2002, 17; Bažil 2009, 25–29, 73.

2 Quotation from von Albrecht 1997, 1316. The issue is discussed in Desbordes 1979, 87–93; Hoesterey 2001, 80; Harvey 2004, 382; McGill 2005, vxii; Damico 2010, 7–8 and 18–21; Arcidiacono 2011, 5–8; Formisano 2012, 524; Curran 2012, 326–327.

3 Hier. *Epist.* 53.7

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my strength, you alone are my great power" or that the Virgilian verse from the second song: "He endured, saying such things, and stood motionless" (2.650) described the crucifixion of Christ.

Since Proba uses the two verses from the *Aeneid* and a fragment of the second Eclogian verse in her *Cento* when narrating the corresponding biblical episodes, the scholarly consensus is that Jerome had our female centonist in mind in this and previous sections of the letter. It has become the text in which the Church father condemned Proba: To quote Zoja Pavlovskis' article from 1989, Proba's writing a cento "doomed her in Jerome's eyes, and dooms her still".[4]

This narrative may be challenged in many ways.[5] First of all, we may call into question to what extent Jerome has Proba in mind in the previous sections of the letter. Many have pointed to the following words that occur some three paragraphs earlier:

> Sola scripturarum ars est, quam sibi omnes passim vindicent: "scribimus indocti doctique poemata passim"; hanc garrula anus, hanc delirius senex, hanc soloecista verbosus, hanc universi praesument.
>
> The art of interpreting the scriptures is the only one that all men everywhere lay claim to. "Learned or not we all write poetry" (Hor. *Epist.* 2.1.117). The chatty old woman, the deranged old man, the loquacious sophist, all of them try their hand at this art.
>
> Jerome, *Letter* 53.7

The majority of scholars believe that this "babbling old lady" must refer to none other than Proba.[6] Alan Cameron goes as far as to claim "No one has ever doubted that he had Proba in mind".[7] An exception is the Italian scholar Alessia Fassina, who has argued that it actually refers to the nun Melania the elder.[8] Both suggestions are equally unconvincing. Jerome is here satirically

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4 Pavlovskis 1989, 83.

5 Scott McGill argued that the critique is not as much addressed to Proba the author as to certain interpretations of Virgilian and Homeric centos (including her auto-interpretation). He suggests that Jerome reacted to people who read Christian centos on the same level as other Bible exegesis. McGill 2007, 179.

6 Shanzer 1986, 239; Matthews 1992, 291, n. 25, 300; Springer 1993, 99–100; Sivan 1993, 142; Shanzer 1994, 82–83; Green 1995, 553; Margoni-Kögler 2001, 118–119; Barnes 2006, 256; Hunter 2007, 71–72; Sandnes 2011, 136.

7 Cameron 2011, 337.

8 Fassina 2004, 29–30.

listing a triad of imaginary characters that would be unfit to deal with biblical interpretation, he is not referring to specific persons.[9] In no way does the text require that we single out a specific person as the target of this attack, since Jerome's point in this passage concerns how common this sort of reckless biblical interpretation is. Besides, why do we refrain from speculating about whom the *delirius senex* and the *soloecista verbosus* represent?[10] I will not further discuss to what extent Jerome is actually referring to Proba and her *Cento* in the different sections of this letter; rather, I want to raise the question whether or not his readers have always perceived this letter in the same way as most twentieth-century scholars have: that is, as the moment at which the Church definitively condemned the *Cento*.

It should first be stated that previous men of the Church before Jerome and even before Proba had been equally skeptical towards cento writing in general. Irenaeus quotes a Homeric cento in his polemic against Gnostics in order to illustrate the method by which heretics misuse the Scriptures, interpreting them haphazardly to suit their own ends.[11] Similarly, Tertullian accuses Marcion of Pontus (fl. 2nd century) for dishonesty and compares his teachings to Hosidius Geta's cento *Medea*.[12] After Jerome we also find expressions of disapproval. In the Gelasian Decree, dating to the end of the fifth century, a "cento about Christ composed of verses from Virgil" (*Centonem de Christo virgilianis conpaginatum versibus*) is included twice in a list of apocryphal texts—books that together with their authors will be eliminated and "for ever bound by the unsolvable shackles of the anathema of the whole Roman and apostolic Church", but Proba's name is not mentioned.

It seems, however, as though most ancient and medieval readers did not pay much attention to this allusive passage in Jerome, or to these other texts that preceded and followed. A dedicatory poem to emperor Arcadius (377/378–408) that precedes the *Cento* in two medieval manuscripts suggests the opposite:[13]

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9 See Testa 2004, 119; Curran 2012, 341.

10 An exception is Testard 1988, 242–244.

11 Iren. *adv. haer.* I. 9.4. cf. Wilken 1967.

12 Tert. *praescr. haer.* 39.3–7: "Today you see how a story completely different is composed out of Virgil, the subject-matter arranged according to the verse and the verse according to the subject-matter." (*Vides hodie ex Virgilio fabulam in totum aliam componi, materia secundum uersus et uersibus secundum materiam concinnatis*).

13 Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Aug. 217; Zürich, Zentralbibliothek, C 68; Laur. plut. 23.15; Rome, Biblioteca Angelica, 1350; cf. Schenkl 1888, 515, 568; Springer 1995, 15–16.

Romulidum ductor, clari lux altera solis,
eoa qui regna regis moderamine iusto,
spes orbis fratrisque decus, dignare Maronem
mutatum in melius divino agnoscere sensu,
scribendum famulo quem iusseras. Hic tibi mundi
principium formamque poli hominemque creatum
expediet limo. Hic Christi proferet ortum,
insidias regis, magorum praemia, doctos
discipulos pelagique minas gressumque per aequor,
hic fractum famulare iugum vitamque reductam
unius crucis auxilio reditumque sepultae
mortis et ascensum pariter sua regna petentis.
Haec relegas servesque diu tradasque minori
Arcadio, haec ille suo semini, haec tua semper
accipiat doceatque suos augusta propago.

Leader of Romulus' descendants, the second light of the bright sun, | you who reign over the eastern realms with just command, | the world's hope and your brother's glory. Think it fit to reacquaint yourself | with Maro changed for the better in a sacred meaning, | whom you ordered your servant to write. Here he will relate the world's | beginning, the shape of heaven and man created | from clay. Here he will set forth the birth of Christ, | the plot of the king, the offerings of the magi, the disciples | taught, and the perils on the sea as well as the walking on water; | here the yoke of slavery broken and life redeemed | through the aid of the one cross; the return from death's | tomb along with the ascension as He departed to his kingdom. | Read it yet again, preserve it for a long time and hand it over to the younger | Arcadius, and may he do the same to his offspring. May your | august descent always assume it and teach it to their own.

The anonymous scribe presents the emperor with "Maro changed for the better" (*Maro mutatus in melius*), i.e. a manuscript containing the *Cento*.[14] It was perhaps also presented to the wife of Arcadius' son and successor Theodosius II, empress Eudocia, who expanded and edited a Christian Homeric cento that had been initiated by a certain bishop Patricius.[15] Thus, writing Christian

14 On the identity of the writer of the dedication see Clark and Hatch 1981, 106; Shanzer 1986, 233; Sivan 1993, 144–145; Green 1997, 548–549; Mastandrea 2001; McGill 2007, 173–174.

15 See Ermini 1909, 28–29; Clark and Hatch 1981, 103; Green 1995, 562; Usher 1997, 315.

centos on pagan poetry was even exercised among men of the Church at this point.

This dedication attests to the text's circulation in Roman elite circles at the turn of the century in the eastern part of the Empire. There are also several Virgilian Christian centos from the same period: *On the Incarnation of the Word*, *Verses to the Glory of the Lord* and *On the Church*,[16] giving us the impression that Proba's poem had an impact on its contemporary literary climate.[17] Her synthesis of classical literature with the Christian story of redemption seems to have been considered a more inspiring use of the cento form than any other such poem. We only know of one possible imitator of Ausonius (i.e. Luxurius), and the *Medea* of Hosidius Geta has no direct imitator as far as we know. It is possible, however, that various centos—secular and non-secular—were lost in later textual transmission, since the relative popularity of Proba's *Cento* was enormous during the Middle Ages.

An early possible reference to Proba's *Cento* is found in the fifth-century *Passion of Saint Eugenia of Rome*. At the moment when this cross-dressing martyr reveals her true identity in front of the court, she manifests herself as a virgin: "And as she said this, she tore from her head the undergarment she was wearing and was revealed to be a maiden with lovely face and beauteous breast." (*Et haec dicens, scidit a capite tunicam qua erat induta et insignis facie paruit et pulcro pectore virgo*). In the *Cento*, the two expressions *insignis facie* and *pulcro pectore* describe Eve as she first appears to Adam (131 ~ *A* 9.583; 3.426).[18] The hypotextual models in the Virgilian narratives are found in a description of the face of Arcen's mother the moment before he is killed in battle, and in the depiction of the beautiful breast that belongs to the cruel Scylla. In the *Cento* of Proba, these gloomy allusions fit in well, since the narrative on Adam and Eve is full of negative Virgilian models prefiguring the great sin and subsequent fall from paradise (pp. 141–146). In the *Passion of Saint Eugenia*, the negative Virgilian models seem inadequate, while the allusion to Eve—via the *Cento* of Proba—makes more sense. As Gordon Whatley put it: "It

16 For the date of *De Ecclesia*, see Fassina 2007^2; Damico 2010, 27–28. For the date of *Versus ad Gratiam Domini*, see Schmid 1953, 155, McGill 2001, 25–26 and Arcidiacono 2011, 14–20; for the date of *De Verbi Incarnatione*, see Giampiccolo 2011, 12; for an overview of the Christian centos, see also Salanitro 1981, 48–58.

17 *Versus ad Gratiam Domini* and *De Verbi incarnatione* imitate the *Cento* of Proba; see Vidal 1983, 235–236; McGill 2001, 25–26; Bažil 2009, 209–212; for *De verbi incarnatione*, see Giampiccolo 2007, 54, Giampiccolo 2011, 12; for *Versus ad Gratiam Domini*, see Arcidiacono 2011, 46–52.

18 Whatley 2012, 107–108.

was surely not a random choice, at this critical juncture in the story, to borrow a verse depicting Adam's bride-to-be and thereby identify Eguenia, typologically, with the beautiful virgin Eve, perhaps to remind us that Eugenia's virginity, like that of the converts she will later win in Rome in the second portion of the legend, is being saved for the second Adam, Christ." As has often been the case with Jerome's letter to Paulinus, this might be regarded as one of the earliest testimonies to the reception of Proba's *Cento*, and as an example at odds with the opinion that the *Cento* was banned by the Church from early on.

Isidore of Seville does not hesitate to include Proba and even praise her for "literary ingenuity" in his *On Famous Men* (a work heavily indebted to a work with the same name by Jerome), without mentioning or alluding to the letter to Paulinus of Nola.[19] Neither Aldhelm of Malmesbury (†709) shows any sign that he is dealing with a condemned text when he mentions Proba in his discussion on Latin meter in *On the Rules of Metrical Feet*, calling her "prominent among poets" (*inter poetas clarissima*).[20] Nor does the number of extant medieval manuscripts indicate that reading the text was in any way problematic. The three shorter Christian Virgilian centos mentioned above exist only in one manuscript each,[21] but there are at least a hundred extant manuscripts preserving Proba's *Cento* (p. 7n22). As this text was transmitted through the various cultural contexts that we call the Middle Ages, the way in which it was read constantly underwent transformation and renewal, but the text never went out of fashion. In the manuscripts, we can trace its development from a school-text listed in the Carolingian curricula[22] to gradually becoming a paratext appended in manuscripts containing the works of Virgil.[23] This was the Proba transmit-

19 Isid. *De vir. ill.* 5, Codoñer Merino (1964) 136. The critique made in passing, "although we do not admire her endeavour, we praise her ingenuity" (*Cuius quidem non miramur studium sed laudamus ingenium*) does not amount to condemnation.

20 See Ziolkowski and Putnam 2008, 94.

21 *De Ecclesia* was transmitted in the Codex Salmasianus and thus dated to the sixth century or later, the manuscript that now is called Par. Lat 13018 is from the 7 th–8th century, see Damico 2010, 9–13. *Versus ad Gratiam Domini*, which has been transmitted only though Pal. lat. 1753 (8th–9th c.) has been dated to the late fourth or early fifth century, see Arcidiacono 2011, 14–28. This is also the case of *De Verbi Incarnatione*, which has been transmitted only through Par. lat. 13047 (8th–9th c.), see Giampiccolo 2011, 11.

22 Glauche 1970, 23–24, 28–29, 93, noted in Margoni-Kögler 2001, 121 n. 27.

23 New Haven, Yale University Library, 700, 13th c., see Kristeller 1990, 639; Saint Petersburg, Library of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Q 433, 14th c., see Kisseleva and Stirnemann 2005, 112–113; London, British Library Harley, 4967, 13th c., see *A Catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts in the British Museum* 1808, 233–234; Hunt 1991, 138; Baldzuhn 2009, 608–612;

ted to early humanists like Petrarch, Boccaccio and Christine de Pisan, who all praise her for excellence and outstanding artistry.

The only mention of Jerome's letter in connection to Proba during this millennium is found in the correspondence between the Paduan politician and author Albertino Mussato and the Dominican friar Giovannino of Mantua.[24] At the outset, Mussato presents the *Cento* of Proba as proof that Virgil was inspired by the Christian God: "Our faith has been completely foretold by holy Maro: consider the celebrated verses of Proba Centona" (*Nostra fides sancto tota est praedicta Maroni: | Inclita Centone dispice metra Probe*).[25] But Giovannino does not share Mussato's view and to prove him wrong he invokes Jerome and his critique of centos in this famous letter.[26] In response to this, Mussato gives an ambiguous and perhaps sarcastic answer:[27]

Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, 367, 15th c., see von Heinemann 1884, 273–274; Vat. lat. 1586, 15th c., see Nogara 1912, 82–83; Pellegrin 1991, 163–165; Zaragoza, Biblioteca del Seminario Sacerdotal de San Carlos, A. 5–25, 15th c., see Kristeller 1989, 667b; Zwickau, Rathsschulbibliothek, XIII, II, 5, 15th c., see Schipke 1990, 115–118.; Vicenza, Biblioteca Civica Bertoliana, 507, 15th c., see Marchioli et al. 2007, 110–111; Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale, F. I V.7, 15th c., see Ottino 1890, 27; Colmar, BM 293, 15th c., see Jeudy and Riou 1989, 472–475, esp. 473; London, BL, Arundel 82, 15th c., see Kristeller 1989, 127; Holzberg 1981, 38–39; Copenhagen, University Library, E. Donat Var 18, 15th c., see Krarup 1935, 172–176; Copenhagen, Royal Library, NKS 159, 15th c., see Jørgensen 1926, 337–338; Milan, Biblioteca Pinacoteca Accademia Ambrosiana, G 111 Inf, 15th c., see Ceruti 1975, 138–139; Pellegrin 1959, 445–448.

24 See Hoch 1997, 26–32; cf. Dazzi 1964, 110–115; Fois 1969, 200–205.

25 We do not have his letter but the friar quotes Mussato in his response. See Giovannino in ed. Garin 1958, 6.

26 See Musatto in ed. Garin 1958, 12: "To the ninth [argument] one can object that Jerome mentions Virgilian and Homeric centos and censures their intention, in his letter to Paulinus that prefaces the books of the Bible, asserting that these verses are extracts from Virgil and Homer that are combined in a manner that goes against their intention in order to signify things that they did not intend. Otherwise, as he says, 'we could call Virgil a Christian without Christ', which is in a contradiction *in obiecto*. Hence he concludes that they are follies, childish, similar to charlatan tricks." (*Ad nonam dici potest quod Virgilio-centonas et Homero-centonas, et contra eorum intentionem, commemorat Hieronymus in epistola ad Paulinum, quae proemittitur libris Bibliae, dicens quod illi versus sunt extracti de Virgilio et Homero, et contra eorum intentionem ad invicem copulati ad significandum ea quae non intendebant. Alias, ut dicit, "Maronem sine Christo possimus dicere Christianum", quod est oppositum in obiecto. Unde concludit quod deliramenta sunt haec, et puerilia, et circulatorum ludo similia.*)

27 Towards the end Mussato asks the friar not to despise his "humble maid servants" (*famulas humiles ne despices*, 177), since they will serve him whenever he wishes. Neither do they

Inde Probam reprobas Christi predicere nisam
adventum clari per lucida verba Maronis.
Hec data de sursum vatem cecinisse putabam,
grata michi nimium. Monitus sed corrigor; unde
sit vix ille Deus quem sic monstraverat? Absit
ut prorsus credam Dominum verumque bonumque
Ieronimo nolente Deum, staboque Prophetis,
quantumcumque suis lateant enigmata dictis.

Then you reproach Proba for having strived to predict the coming | of Christ through the luminous words of illustrious Maro. | I believed that the poet sang of these things, given from above, | things highly agreeable to me. But I have been admonished and corrected. Accordingly, | that man could hardly be God as Virgil showed? Far be it | from me to believe in the Lord, the true and the good God | against the will of Jerome, and I will remain faithful to the prophets, | no matter how deep the riddles lie hidden in their words.

168–175

Similarly, the anonymous *Declaratio* explaining and contesting Giovannino's letter in the Venetian edition of 1636 also defends Proba, arguing that by his criteria it would be equally impossible to call the Old-testament prophets "Christians without Christ".[28]

However, during the centuries that followed, there was no universal awareness of Jerome's letter to Paulinus in relation to the *Cento*. Instead, the same Church father started to be invoked as a patron of Proba. As Cazes observes, evocations of the friendship with Jerome even replaces the need for long excursuses on the author in late sixteenth-century editions.[29] (The twentieth century

suffer from jealousy (*has non livor habet*, 179) and they will always follow his steps (*vestigia semper adorent*, 180). See ed. Chevalier 2000, 48.

28 Garin 1958, 16: "In answer to the ninth [argument] it is said that if we would like to respond to Jerome and the others who make the same claim, we could simply say that Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and the rest of the prophets can be said to be Christians without Christ, just like Virgil. For Christ had not yet arrived during their lifetimes." (*Ad nonum respondetur quod, si velimus Hieronymo respondere et aliis idem asserentibus, simpliciter dicere possimus Isaiam, Ezechielem, Danielem et ceteros prophetas dici posse christianos sine Christo, sicut Virgilium. Nondum enim tempore eorum Christus venerat.*)

29 Cazes 1998, 338: "point n' était besoin de longs excursus sur l' auteur, il suffisait de rappeler l' amitié de Jérôme."

has seen an inverted version of this habit: it has been sufficient to evoke the hostility of Jerome towards Proba and her *Cento*.) Cazes believes that the basis for the Early Modern readers' invocation of Jerome was a misinterpretation of the letter to Paulinus,[30] but it is also possible that it is connected with another letter, sent to Demetrias in 414, where Jerome praises the granddaughter of Proba the centonist, Anicia Faltonia Proba:[31]

> Proba illa, omnium dignitatum et cunctae nobilitatis in orbe romano nomen inlustris, cuius sanctitas et in universos effuse bonitas etiam apud barbaros venerabilis fuit.
>
> Proba, a name famous for all the honor and every kind of nobility in the Roman world, whose holiness and generous goodness towards everyone was venerable, even among barbarians.
>
> JEROME, *Letter* 130

During the early Modern era many believed that this younger Proba was the author of the *Cento* (see chapter 1), and Jerome's praise of her thus contributed to its popularity. In the first printed edition of the *Cento* produced by Bartolomeo Girardino in 1472, Proba is presented as the admired and virtuous correspondent of Jerome. In many subsequent editions the name of the Church father was therefore incorporated in the title to enhance its status and dignity: "The cento of the illustrious poet Proba Falconia, approved of by divine Jerome" (*Probaeque falconiae vatis clarissimae a divo hieronymo comprobatae centonam*).[32] The Dominican Antoine Dufour writes that Jerome admired the Virgilian and Homeric centos of Proba in *The Lives of Famous Women* from 1515,[33] and in the preface to his reprint of Barbieri's book, Köbel informs his

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30 Cazes 1998, 293–294, 303–304.

31 On this letter, see Jacobs 2000, 728–730; Beaune and Lequain 2000, 116 n. 33; Cameron 2011, 337. Cf. Fontanini 1723 [1708], 242; Delepierre 1866, 74.

32 With variations in editions of Benali (Venice 1495); Misinta (Brescia 1496); de Luere (Venice 1512); Tacuino (Venice 1513); Basignana (Lyon 1516); Köbel (Oppenheim 1517 [1514]); Sussaneau and Brito (Paris 1543); Lycosthènes and Parcus (Basel 1546); Estienne (Geneva 1578); Plateanus (Cologne repr. 1592). See also the title of the French translation in Le Blanc (Paris 1553): *Opuscule sus le Mystère de nostre foy, colligé des carmes de Vergile, réduis en ordre par Proba Falconia femme bien recommandée en la poésie, approuvée de S. Hierome*. Cf. Cazes 1998, 299–300.

33 Dufour in ed. Jeanneau 1970, 142–143.

readers that Jerome lauded her intelligence, her culture and her virtuous life.[34]

To my knowledge, the earliest printed text that puts Jerome's fifty-third letter in relation to Proba is the edition of literary historian Giglio Gregorio Giraldi's *History of the Poets* from 1545. He mentions that he himself has read the centos of Proba and Eudocia and admires them greatly, and then adds that Jerome also affirms in a letter to Paulinus of Nola that he read them. There is no mention, however, of the fact that Jerome speaks of cento writing in negative terms.[35] Furthermore, in the margin of a copy of this book preserved at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, we find a note in the hand of the French scholar Paul Colomiès (1638–1692): "However, there is nothing on Proba Falconia there" (*Ibi tamen nihil de Proba Falconia*). Apparently, Colomiès checked the letter but did not find the allusion clear enough.

The Lutheran scholar Casimir Oudin also discussed Jerome's letter to Paulinus in his work on ancient ecclesiastical writers from 1722, but concluded that the Church father cannot be referring to Proba's *Cento* here since he praises her so fervently in the letter to Demetrias.[36] Oudin was quoted by Johann Christoph Wolf in his repertoire over female writers from 1739 and he draws the conclusion that it must have been the older Proba who wrote the *Cento*, not Jerome's contemporary Anicia Faltonia Proba (which is the general opinion today).[37] But even scholars such as Octave Delepierre, who accepted the possibility that Jerome referred to Proba's *Cento*, criticized the poor taste of those among his contemporaries who adopted the Church father's opinion and denounced their lack of understanding for this literary form.[38]

In his critical edition of the *Cento* from 1888, Karl Schenkl writes in a footnote that he finds it impossible to establish that Jerome is really referring to Proba in the letter to Paulinus.[39] Ermini, however, in his 1909 monograph on Proba, held that this was clearly the case.[40] During the decades that followed, an increasing number of voices were raised, not only invoking Jerome but also—for

34 Köbel (Oppenheim 1517 [1514]), f. 1^v.

35 Giraldi 1545, 635–636: *Extat certè uterque Cento, à me summa cum admiratione perlectus, quos & D. Hieronymus ad Paulinum se legisse affirmat. Quibus Hieronymi verbis elicere possumus, ante Probam etiam & Eudociam ab aliis huiusmodi poëmata fuisse conscripta: quod tamen & in primo sermone diximus.*

36 Oudin 1722, 900–901.

37 Wolf 1735, 351–352.

38 Delepierre 1866, 19.

39 Schenkl 1888, 516 n. 1.

40 Ermini 1909, 62.

the first time since the sour medieval friar Giovannino—emphatically agreeing with him. In 1920, the French scholar Pierre de Labriolle wrote that it is fully understandable that the *Cento* upset Jerome's judgment: "On comprend l'agacement que ces contrefaçons bien intentionnées [...] causaient au bon sens de saint Jérôme."[41] The Swedish classicist Harald Hagendahl claimed in 1958 that the Church father "had Proba's poem in his thoughts" and conjectured that doubtlessly the preposterousness of the *Cento* "disturbed the taste of Jerome".[42] However, even if we believe that Jerome's statement was conceived by the author and perceived by his ancient contemporaries as a clear allusion to Proba, there is most certainly nothing there about the aesthetic values of the cento form. Similar uses of Jerome's letter as literary criticism abound from the latter half of the twentieth century. For instance, Jacques Fontaine stated in 1981: "On ne chicanera pas Jérôme sur sa dénonciation des vers torturés et bizarres par lesquels Proba a décrit la crucifixion";[43] Pavlovskis, again, in 1989: "It can easily confuse and offend a sensibility such as that of Jerome";[44] and Jane Stevenson, apologetically, in 2005: "As a matter of taste, one's sympathies are naturally with Jerome, but there is no doubt that Proba has logical consistency on her side."[45]

In conclusion: As soon as the opinion that Jerome is referring to Proba had been solidified and canonized at the turn of the century, a narrative emerged in which Proba—in a world of grim Church fathers and an authoritative Church—had done a foolish thing when laying claim to the authority of Virgil and the Bible, and breaking the aesthetic ideals of her own age.[46] But this authority was rarely granted to Jerome;[47] the anathema of the Gelasian decree was not respected,[48] and any aesthetic shortcomings were rarely considered until these very twentieth-century scholars came along.

41 de Labriolle 1920, 431.

42 Hagendahl 1958, 189.

43 Fontaine 1981, 104.

44 Pavlovskis 1989, 81.

45 Stevenson 2005, 68.

46 For an epitome of this narrative see Sandnes 2011, 25: "the composition of centos was viewed with scepticism, not to say aversion, by many contemporary Christians. Their negative sentiments have percolated into the way in which scholars came to perceive this literature".

47 Cf. Cain 2009, 197–203.

48 Cf. Schenkl 1888, 516: "For unless that cento was honored by the fact that everyone read it, just like the poems of Juvencus and Sedulius which accumulated so much praise in the decree, then Gelasius and the others at the council would not have included it among the

The *Cento* started to be called things like “an interesting failure”, “a badly stitched patchwork quilt”, “a poorly written school exercise”, “a literary curiosity rather than a poem”, and so on.[49] The very existence of the poem had to be explained and scholars often resorted to regard it as exclusively a pedagogical tool for Proba’s own children (pp. 50–54). The author-function thus underwent a fundamental transformation from the persona established in the text itself—a solemn prophet filled by divine inspiration—to the satirically portrayed, non-authoritative and easily criticized babbling old woman (*garrula anus*), implausibly imported from Jerome’s letter. This shift had an impact on the ways in which scholars read the text.

Cento and Authenticity

The present disdain of the *Cento* of Proba is often blamed on the aesthetic ideals of the eighteenth century. The same tendency in which Edward Young rejected imitating art as unauthentic and false may also be detected from early on in the reception of the *Cento*. In 1772, Girolamo Tiraboschi claimed that Proba’s *Cento* showed her to be “no more than a jumbler of the verses of others”,[50] and in the early nineteenth century Thomas Frognall Dibdin (1776–1847) wrote: “There is little or nothing in the body of the work (it being a mere compilation) deserving of extraction.”[51] In the encyclopedia *Nouvelle Biographie Générale* from 1856 the author finds that the poem does not live up to its former reputation: “Un pareil tour de force, quoique exécuté avec beaucoup d’habilité, ne mérite certainement pas les éloges que lui ont prodigués Boccace et Henri Estienne”,[52] later paraphrased with greater severity in an English encyclopedia: “Of course

books that were not to be accepted”. (*Nam nisi cento ille eodem modo, quo Iuvenci et Sedulii carmina in decreto tantis laudibus cumulata, omnium lectione celebratus esset, nullo pacto Gelasius quique aderant in concilio eum inter libros non recipiendos rettulissent.*)

49 Witke 1971, 198: “an interesting failure”; Evans 1968, 116: “a badly stitched patchwork quilt”; Pasquali 1951, 12: “esercizio scolastico inferiore”; “passatempo”; Heider 1918, 19: “a literary curiosity rather than a poem”. According to Bright (1984, 81), Proba’s quest was “a complex and simple-minded” one, recalling Samuel Johnson’s famous words: “A woman’s preaching is like a dog’s walking on his hinder legs. It is not done well; but you are surprised to find it done at all.”

50 Tiraboschi 1782, 397: “soltanto laboriosa accozzatrice degli altrui versi”.

51 Dibdin 1814–1815, 175.

52 Hoefer 1852, 45.

no praise, except what is merited by idle industry and clever dullness, is due to this patch-work; and we cannot but marvel at the gentle terms employed by Boccaccio and Henry Stephens in reference to such trash."[53]

The polarity between imitation and originality increased with the copyright law, which appeared in its first version in 1710 in England and subsequently underwent several developments up until the second half of the century.[54] It was established that it would be illegal to copy an author's style, sensibility and tone and the concept of plagiarism therefore became an increasingly important element in literary discourse during the nineteenth century.[55] But despite these restrictions, imitation and re-use of older literature continued to play an important part in the poetic process of many authors. A good example of this is Laurence Sterne's (1713–1786) nine volume novel *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (1759–1767), where a large number of phrases and sentences were taken from Robert Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621).[56] In fact, Burton himself frequently excerpted from other works and explicitly calls his book a cento. A discussion on the legal aspects of Sterne's "plagiarism" was initiated in the 1790s and lasted for decades.[57] Cento poetry, however, was not regarded as an illegal form of plagiarism since cento writers by definition openly admit to re-use and disclose the source of the quotations.[58] Charles Nodier (1780–1844) defined cento as an innocent form of plagiarism, since it requires patience and diligence on the part of the "thief". He describes it as a childish literary form that sprung from the Roman period of decadence, but adds that since long it has fallen into oblivion, although there are some poets who secretly use the technique but give their work a less conspicuous title.[59]

The reputation of the *Cento* was not immediately affected by the new aesthetic paradigm and copyright legislations, but rather it underwent gradual decline during the century. With technical developments it became easier and cheaper to print texts, which contributed to an increase in expectations

53 Smith 1846, 134.

54 McGill (2005, xvii) suggests that the negative criticism of centos in the twentieth century partly is due to confusion between plagiarism and cento.

55 Mazzeo 2007, 13–14.

56 Apart from *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, Sterne also centonized Francis Bacon's work *Of Death*, Francois Rabelais' tales about Gargantua and Pantagruel and many other works.

57 Howes 1971, 13–15 and 281–306.

58 Saint-Amour 2003, 46; cf. also Hayot and Wesp 2011, 315.

59 Nodier 2003 (1812), 10–11. This statement is repeated in Delepierre 1866, 11.

on the 'authenticity' of a text, compensating for its relative loss in value.[60] The cento form was essentially incompatible with this demand and fundamentally at odds with the concept of 'authenticity'. Hence, the French grammarian and philosopher César Chesneau Du Marsais, on the topic of centos, affirms that "one should occupy oneself with thinking well and with expressing well what one thinks, rather than waste time with a work where the spirit is always in shackles, where thought is subordinated to the words; instead, it is the words that one must always subordinate to the thoughts."[61] Compared to the romantic poets and writers, the centonists appear as mere compilers and organizers. Proba's imitation lacks the inventiveness that characterizes the kind of polyphony found in eighteenth century novels, such as Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, where the excerpts are secretly incorporated in a distinct and coherent narrative. In Proba's work, the words spoken by the authorial voice are always Virgil's, and the subject matter that of the Bible. This non-personal quality did not match the expectations on literature in a cultural climate where a fascination with the unique author-genius was gaining ground.

An interesting discussion of the *Cento* is found in Elizabeth Barrett Browning's (1806–1863) *Essays on the Greek Christian Poets and the English Poets*, published in 1842. She begins by warning the reader that the ancient centonists were not accomplished poets and goes on to state that this applies especially to the Homeric cento attributed to Eudocia.[62] Nevertheless, unwilling to imagine Eudocia "pulling Homer's gold to pieces bit by bit", Barrett Browning resorts to putting the blame on Proba:

> what if we find her "a whipping boy" to take the blame?—what if we write down a certain Proba "improba," and bid her bear it? For Eudocia having been once a mark to slander, may have been so again; and Falconia Proba, having committed centoism upon Virgil, must have been capable of any thing. […] So shall we impute evil to only one woman, and she not an Athenian;
>
> BARRETT BROWNING 1863 [1842], 69

60 Macfarlane 2007, 24–25.

61 Du Marsais 1730, 255: "[…] mais il vaut mieux s'occuper à bien penser, et à bien exprimer ce qu'on pense, qu'à perdre le temps à un travail où l'esprit est toujours dans les entraves, où la pensée est subordonnée aux mots, au lieu que ce sont les mots qu'il faut toujours subordonner aux pensées".

62 Barrett Browning 1863, 66–69.

Barrett Browning had difficulties finding great female poetic predecessors, "a worthy grandmother",[63] in Proba or Eudocia and describes the centonic method of composition as an act of violent criminality. In order to clear the latter poet from these charges she thus playfully gives Proba (her Latin name meaning 'good', 'honest') the epithet *improba* 'wicked', 'dishonest', and adopts the old ungrounded idea that Proba wrote the Homeric cento ascribed to Eudocia (pp. 25–26). This disattribution is necessary in order to declare the English poets the true successors of the Greeks:

> And the Genius of English Poetry, she who only of all the earth is worthy (Goethe's spirit may hear us say so, and smile), stooping, with a royal gesture, to kiss the dead lips of the Genius of Greece, stands up her successor in the universe, by virtue of that chrism, and in right on her own crown.
>
> BARRETT BROWING 1863, 225–226

Thus, in the name of Hellenism the cento form is characterized as a furtive act of imitation that belongs to Latinity. Similarly, the author and theologian Frederic William Farrar (1831–1903) complained about centos' lack of originality and connected them strictly to Roman literature, presented as inferior to the Greek. For Farrar, the cento becomes a paradigm of poor yet ostentatious literature, and he adds that in his own time one could encounter poems that were reminiscent of the worst compositions of the late Roman poets—poems that only consist of verses from Virgil—that still won applause and awards at universities.[64]

Changes in the conception of Virgil also affected Proba. In 1820 Sharon Turner wrote: "Her subjects were, the history of the creation, the deluge, and Christ. She narrates these histories in centos from Virgil, who knew nothing about them." Turner then goes on to reject the poem as whimsical and an example of bad taste.[65] The authenticity in Proba's text decreased as the belief that Virgil was a pre-Christian gradually faded.

But this rejection of the *Cento*'s lack of authenticity was not the only voice in the nineteenth century. Placed within a category of odd and curious literature,

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63 In letter to Mr Chorley on January 7, 1845, ed. Kenyon 2007, 137: "[…] where were the poetesses? […] I look everywhere for grandmothers and see none".

64 Farrar 1867, 224.

65 Turner 1823 (1820), 335.

the ancient centos often attracted the interest of readers. They were treated with a mix of fascination and condescension. In a study about odd literature, Isaac D'Israeli (1766–1848) oxymoronically described Proba and Eudocia as "grave triflers" but found Ausonius' *Nuptial Cento* "pleasant". D'Israeli quoted Richard Owen Cambridge's definition of centos, which included an element of theft in his description of centos as "a work wholly composed of verses, or passages promiscuously taken from other authors".[66] This description of cento poetry was repeatedly quoted,[67] once in the 1849 issue of the children's magazine *Robert Merry's Museum*. In this article, the literary form is presented as a fireplace pastime and some specimens are presented, inferior—the author admits—in relation to Ausonius, Eudocia and Proba. The reader is reassured that although difficult, it is both interesting and entertaining to search one's memory for appropriate verses and careful instructions are given on how to proceed.[68] A decade later, in a methodist ladies magazine, it was presented as "one of the most recent of the fashionable fireside amusements in English society", interesting for "those who read much and have good memories".[69] The cento form invites the reader to interact, and this is found to be attractive. Thus, in a more lighthearted spirit, the cento form was presented as paradigm for the playful aspects of literature by Octave Delepierre in a treatise on centos first published 1866–1867.[70] He argues that this sort of composition is one of the most pleasant and witty poetical forms imaginable and that they are generally greatly appreciated by readers, if only for a brief period of time. Furthermore, in his overview of odd literature from 1867, Charles Carroll Bombaugh offered a sympathetic presentation of Eudocia, Proba (assumed to be a man) and Alexander Ross. He also published four contemporary centos. The first consists of sentences from contemporary poets (Wordsworth, Coleridge, Tennyson etc.), the second consists of four stanzas with quotations from Alexander Pope and the final two are biblical centos, one with verses from the New Testament and the other with verses from the Old.[71] Bombaugh's book became a success and was reprinted in an edition twice as large in 1890.[72]

66 D'Israeli 1835 (1791–1807), 79; cf. Cambridge 1751, 15.

67 For instance by Bombaugh 1860, 52.

68 "Sports of the Fireside", *Robert Merry's Museum* 1849, 99–104. Cf. also "Fireside Games", *Chamber's Edinburgh Journal* 1848, 417–419.

69 "Notes and Queries", *The Ladie's repository* 1861, 563.

70 Cazes 1998, 145–154, esp. 146.

71 Bombaugh 1860, 52–55.

72 Saint-Amour 2003, 44.

In conclusion, at the end of the nineteenth century, cento poetry was perceived as a literary game and a lighthearted genre. Basically, we come close to Ausonius' conception of it as a "task for the memory" as something to "laugh at rather than praise".[73]

Centos and Cut-up

Moving on to the twentieth century, we will find that *cento*-like literature moved from the area of Methodist magazines and university competitions into the rebellious literary avant-garde. Tristan Tzara's (1896–1963) famous description from 1920 of how to write Dadaistic poetry is, after all, not very different from the cento method:

> Prenez un journal.
> Prenez des ciseaux.
> Choisissiez dans ce journal un article ayant la longueur que vous
> comptez donner à votre poème.
> Découpez l'article.
> Découpez ensuite avec soin chacun des mots qui forment cet article et
> mettez-les dans un sac.
> Agitez doucement. Sortez ensuite chaque coupure l'une après l'autre.
> Copiez consciencieusement dans l'ordre où elles ont quitté le sac.
> Le poème vous ressemblera.
> Et vous voilà un écrivain infiniment original et d'une sensibilité
> charmante, encore qu'incomprise du vulgaire.
>
> Take a newspaper. | Take a pair of scissors. | Choose in this newspaper an article as long as you are planning to make your poem. | Cut out the article. | Next carefully cut out each of the words that make this article and put them in a bag. | Shake gently. Next take out each cutting one after the other. | Copy conscientiously in the order in which they left the bag. | The poem will resemble you. | And there you are—an infinitely original author of charming sensibility, even though unappreciated by the vulgar herd.
>
> TZARA 1963, 64; transl. WRIGHT 1977, 39

73 See translation of Ausonius' preface to his *Nuptial Cento* in McGill 2005, 2–3.

This almost stichomantic technique differs only slightly from traditional centonic poetry; even random recycling of a given text will produce a work of art that "resembles" the artist, meaning that it is original and charming. Tzara's quasi-centonian model lived on and was famously adopted—with less randomness—in the mid twentieth century by Brion Gysin and William S. Burroughs. In their so-called cut-up poem "Minutes to Go" they describe this new technique as follows:

> [...] Pick a book any book cut it up
> cut up
> prose
> poems
> newspapers
> magazines
> the bible
> the koran
> the books of moroni
> la-tzu
> confucius
> the bhagavad gita
> anything
> letters
> business correspondence
> ads
> all the words
>
> slice down the middle dice into sections
> according to taste
> chop in some bible pour on some Madison Avenue prose
> shuffle like cards toss like confetti
> taste it like piping hot alphabet soup
>
> pass yr friends' letters yr office carbons
> through any such sieve as you may find or invent
>
> you will soon see just what they really are
> saying this is the terminal method for
> finding the truth

piece together a masterpiece   a week
use better materials   more highly charged words

there is no longer a need   to drum up a season of
geniuses   be your own agent   until we deliver
the machine   in commercially reasonable quantities

we wish to announce   that while we esteem
this to be truly   the American Way
we have no commitments   with any government
groups

the writing machine   is for everybody
do it yourself   until the machine comes
here is the system   according to us.

Minutes to go ed. WEISS 2001, 73–74

This description of the method of composition is in itself claimed to have been composed with words cut out from printed texts. Gysin's point was to call attention to the materiality of language: "There's an actual treatment of the material as if it were a piece of cloth. The sentence, even the word, becomes a real piece of plastic material that you can cut into."[74] The basic idea—to extract words and arrange them in the new context—is the same as in the cento. A notable difference in terminology is that the beat-poets' "cut up" puts emphasis on the act of shredding apart, whereas "cento" highlights the sewing together of loose pieces, thus indicating, perhaps, an important difference in hermeneutic perspective. The centonists piece together a set of *disiecta membra* while the beat-poets deconstruct existing entities. Gysin and Burroughs also applied the technique to radio recordings. In one entitled "Origin and Theory of the Tape Cut-Ups" Burroughs even ascribes divinatory functions to cut-up: "If you cut into the present the future leaks out."[75] This conviction is reminiscent of Proba's declaration in the introduction to her poem: that she will disclose the true meaning of Virgil's texts. Both methods, cento and cut-up, are based on the principle of cutting and pasting. Thus both Proba and Burroughs, in completely different historical and cultural contexts, express a sensation of revealing the

74 Weiss 2001, 70.

75 Geiger 2005, 147–148, from William S. Burroughs, "Origin and Theory of the Tape Cut-Ups", in *Break Through in the Grey Room*, Sub Rosa Records, 1986.

inner truth of a text by shuffling its constituent parts. In late antiquity as in the twentieth century—both periods of great socio-political and religious change and with authors loaded with the heavy burden of belatedness—poets found it attractive to experiment with the central texts of their canon. Yet there are also notable differences: Where the cut-up poets cut apart and tear down the preexisting text, the Christian centonist bridged the gap between the old text and the new context. Centos and belatedness is also thematized in Umberto Eco's novel *The Name of the Rose* (1980), where the protagonist Adso sits in the burned remains of the monastery library, gazing at a gathering of burned book fragments:

> Mine was a poor harvest, but I spent a whole day reaping it, as if from those disiecta membra of the library a message might reach me. […] I studied them with love, as if destiny had left me this bequest, as if having identified the destroyed copy were a clear sign from heaven that said to me: Tolle et lege. At the end of my patient reconstruction, I had before me a kind of lesser library, a symbol of the greater, vanished one: a library made up of fragments, quotations, unfinished sentences, amputated stumps of books.
>
> ECO 1998 [1983], 500, transl. WEAVER

Adso then turns to the reader and reveals that these fragments make up the skeleton of the book he has written, a literary work which he says is "only a cento":

> I have almost had the impression that what I have written on these pages, which you will now read, unknown reader, is only a cento, a figured hymn, an immense acrostic that says and repeats nothing but what those fragments have suggested to me.
>
> ECO 1998 [1983], 501, transl. WEAVER

Adso expresses a sensation of being at the end of a culture that has gone lost, and an urge of saving what is left of it and thereby allow the fragments to speak through him. By alluding to Augustine's *Confessions* and to the literary practice of *sortes biblicae*, he inscribes his novel in a tradition where the author is transcended by the text and expresses a historical self-consciousness.

Centos and Modern Scholarship

The discourse on Proba and her authorship went through a change in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries when it once again became problematic to call the writer of a cento its author. According to some scholars, the *Cento* invites us to conceive of Virgil as its 'true' author, whereas Proba is simply an interpreter.[76] Centonists are often referred to as 'composers' or 'compilers', secondary artists who 'steal' verses from an original author,[77] and "lack authorial respect".[78] Others feel that the *Cento* does not invite to this at all. As one scholar recently put it: "Even if we say that every word (almost) is 'his' [Virgil's], Proba is still starkly visible as an author: because every word is now 'hers'."[79] It is clear that the question of authorship in this debate is connected with the concept of ownership and an assumption that you cannot be an author if you do not single-handedly 'own' your verses. These statements are anchored in the author ethics of the twentieth century since it demands originality: on the one hand reflecting the personality of the author, on the other since it is valued in legal and economic terms; as Sirkku Aaltonen puts it: "Indebtedness to others is seen as a handicap which will decrease the value of a work which is then considered a copy of somebody else's original."[80] Therefore, composing a cento necessarily involves an act of theft and violence. Philip Hardie distinguishes two separate modes of centonic authorship: one of self-denial in which the centonist "submits himself or herself entirely to the authority of the model text […] abandoning his or her own voice, to become a channel spoken through by another text", and another characterized as an act of violence: "The imitator asserts his own authorial personality through the violence done to the model text, whose fragments are recombined into something that becomes the property of the cento author."[81] This duality between submission or wrongdoing is a recurring theme in the reception of Proba that testifies to her ancillary status in relation to Virgil's canonic texts and lack of autonomous integrity; she frequently becomes a servant at his court who can either carry out her duties or turn against her master and defraud him. According to John Edwin Sandys, she even "tortured" Virgil

76 Cf. Herzog 1975, 51.

77 Lyne 2004 (1978), 47; Kleinhenz and Barker 2004, 425; Stevenson 2005, 67. Cf. Saint-Amour 2003, 45–46.

78 Sandnes 2011, 120, 236.

79 Dykes 2011, 34.

80 Aaltonen 2000, 99.

81 Hardie 2007, 170–171.

into a sacred *Cento*.[82] This is admittedly a general problem in discussions on *mimesis* as slavish imitation versus active appropriation, but due to the *Cento*'s particular ubiquitous hypertextual re-use of Virgil the question becomes particularly important. Even initially sympathetic scholars will often end up characterizing Proba's *Cento* as "naturally parasitic", "bizarre", "awkward", "deformed" and "grotesque".[83]

Despite strong affinities in aesthetics, the twentieth century was the period in history when scholars more fervently than ever spurned these late antique literary experiments. The entry 'cento' disappeared from the dictionaries at the beginning of the century,[84] and even into the twenty-first century, scholars claimed that cento seems "quite unrelated to any idea of poetry",[85] and even in essentially sympathetic repertories of ancient female writers, Proba's poem was an "apparently perverse task".[86] This development has been put in relation to the development of the definition of art during this period, involving idealization of literary autonomy and rejection of literature based on principles of imitation and appropriation by German philosophers of aesthetics, e.g. Theodor W. Adorno.[87] But such distinctions between true art and mass-produced commercial culture seem to have very little to do with the reception of ancient centos. Even Walter Benjamin—the author of *The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction*—characterized his *Passagenwerk* (written between 1927–1940) as "a montage of quotations without quotation marks", and employed a centonic method which he described as progressive, since the act of transferring quotations from their original context implies a rupture of the illusory feeling typical to realistic forms of representation.[88] What we see in the twentieth century is problematizations of imitation and appropriation in literature. Ideas about the relationship between original and copy are thematized by Jorge Luis Borges (1899–1986) in the short story "Pierre Menard, autor del Quijote" (1939), where the narrator lists the literary works of the fictional author Pierre Menard. Among these is a word-by-word rewriting of Miguel Cervantes' classic *Don Quixote*. Borges compares these two identical works claiming that the copy is "richer" than the original since it is more

82 Sandys 1906 (1903), 216–217.

83 For instance Lamacchia 1958, 216; Pavlovskis 1989, 76; Kirk 1998, 134; Sandnes 2011, 107.

84 Cazes 1998, 56.

85 Moreschini and Norelli 2005, 331.

86 Stevenson 2005, 67.

87 Hoesterey 2001, 82.

88 Benjamin/Hanssen 2006, 82.

ambiguous: "Cervantes' text and the Menard text are verbally identical, but the second is almost infinitely richer (More ambiguous, his detractors will say—but ambiguity is richness)."[89] The significance of the text changes and even expands although the text in itself stays the same because the author of the copy (Pierre Menard) reads the original in light of the time that has passed since *Don Quixote* was first written. This compels the reader of the copy (the narrator) to reflect upon the difference between Cervantes' *Don Quixote* and Menard's *Don Quixote*.[90] From this perspective, even an exact word-by-word copy does not necessarily intrude upon the original but represents an enriched version with new meaning through the dialogue between original and copy and the mix of different horizons and contexts of reading/writing. But the *Cento* was rarely seen as enrichment by classical scholars contemporary to Borges.

Thus it becomes difficult to speak about the *Cento* being at odds with 'modern taste' since much twentieth century literature is constructed in a cento-like way. T.S. Eliot's "The Waste Land" (1922), one of the most influential poems of the century, is essentially a pastiche of classical works of literature. So perhaps Proba's *Cento* did not fall out of favor *because of* changing aesthetic ideals in Western culture, but rather *despite* these changes, which entailed giving privilege to cutting up, imitating, quoting and adapting older works of literature. This discontinuity should make us reflect upon the gap between reception in creative and academic communities, which in the twentieth century often presents itself like an abyss. It is particularly problematic when engaging with the reception of a marginalized text such as Proba's *Cento*, since it almost never took place in non-academic settings after Barrett Browning.

Scholars today who call for a revaluation of the *Cento* still tend to fall back into old patterns and keep calling Proba insignificant[91] and her poem insipid[92] and grotesque.[93] Many feel that the only way to vindicate Proba is through the historicist claim that even if a reader today may find the *Cento* a "tedious and foolish effort at plagiarism", in antiquity, using somebody else's work was considered the highest form of flattery.[94] Or as Eva Stehlíková puts it: "The

89 El texto de Cervantes y el de Menard son verbalmente idéndicos, pero el segundo es infinitamente más rico (Más ambiguo, dirán sus detractores; pero la ambigüedad es una riqueza). English. transl. Hurley 1998, 94.

90 Cf. Franco 1999, 393–425, esp. 395.

91 Beaune and Lequain 2000, 117.

92 Sivan 2011, 32.

93 Moreschini and Norelli 2005, 332; Díaz Patri 2009, 51.

94 Quotation from Kastner and Millin 1981, 36; cf. Wiesen 1971, 84: "a kind of poem which can-

mixing of two different cultural strata, which may nowadays be regarded as grotesque, was in its time regarded as something wholly natural."[95] Who is this present-day reader? Certainly not the reader of Tzara and Burroughs, or, for that matter, of a centonist such as Umberto Eco. The only readers who are so appalled by the *Cento* are these scholars who reproduce rather old-fashioned aesthetic principles. Their true sentiments actually seem to be founded in their respect for the canon within the discipline of Classics and the supreme authority of Virgil, but this criticism cannot be openly professed. Scholars who feel that Virgil's texts represent—to use a phrase of Georgia Nugent—a "closed domain",[96] need a spokesperson, or rather a scapegoat, in order to express their indignation when confronted with Proba's appropriation of the great Roman poet, and for this purpose the stern Church father Jerome has often been the obvious choice.

Summary and Conclusions

The combination of genre experimentation, stylistic conservatism and synthesis of pagan and Christian culture that we find in Proba's poem is typical in many ways of late antique poetry. Nevertheless, it has been described as an oddity and provoked negative reactions especially in twentieth-century classical scholarship. Jerome's letter 53 to Paulinus of Nola has played a prominent part in recent reception of Proba. This text was often brought up as proof that the *Cento* was disliked by its contemporary readers, yet the letter was rarely conceived in this way before the twentieth century. On the contrary,

not fail to seem preposterous to the modern reader"; Clark and Hatch 1981, 102: "foreign to modern taste"; Clark and Hatch 1981^2, 31: "an oddity foreign to taste"; Pavlovskis 1989, 70–71 and 75; Kaczynski 2002, 131: "At first encounter, such composition may seem bizarre to modern readers.": Moreschini and Norelli 2005, 332: "grotesque to modern taste"; Cooper 2007, 65: "uncomfortably stylized from a modern viewpoint"; Worth 2007, 66–67; "by our standards the work is blatantly plagiaristic […] To the modern taste, such an amalgamation seems uncreative and not worth the effort; the ancients however put a much higher value on such attempts and often deeply appreciated them."; Hunter 2007, 68: "an oddity by modern standards"; Cooper 2013, 142: "Proba's project […] seem strange to us, but it would have appealed to a group of readers who found the rough diction of the Gospels distasteful."; Damico 2010, 18–19: "un *lusus* del genere rimane agli occhi di noi moderni difficile da comprendersi."

95 Stehlíková 1987, 13.

96 Nugent 1990, 38; cf. Formisano and Sogno 2010, 385.

Jerome was often invoked as Proba's supporter in many early modern editions. When the letter started to be read as a critique of the *Cento* at the beginning of the twentieth century, the perception of its author underwent a fundamental transformation, moving away from the persona established in the text itself—a solemn prophet filled by divine inspiration—to the satirically portrayed, non-authoritative and easily criticized babbling old woman extracted on doubtful grounds from Jerome's letter. This late-antique 'condemnation' of the *Cento* has often been perceived as an aesthetical one, and the text is claimed to have upset the good 'taste' and 'judgment' of the Church Father. Although there are several other and more reliable texts documenting responses to Proba's *Cento* from the same period, Jerome became her contemporary reader *par excellence* and the natural conclusion was that Proba did a foolish thing when choosing the Virgilian cento as the literary form for a devotional poem. There was suddenly a need to explain the very existence of the poem; accordingly, from the mid-twentieth century onwards, it has frequently been emphasized that it was a pedagogical tool in which the poet/teacher mainly addressed children, and specifically her own two sons.

Certain changes in the literary climate from the eighteenth century and onwards may have affected the changing perspectives on Proba and her *Cento*, such as changing ethics and aesthetics of literary production and the emergence of copyright laws, which in the long run indirectly led to the view of Proba as a thief who 'stole' from the great poet instead of coming up with her own verses. Another factor that may have contributed to the decline of its reputation in the nineteenth century is the negative view on Latinity and its literary tradition based on imitation, as opposed to the presumed literary authenticity of the Greek literature. This attitude towards the *Cento* did not diminish during the twentieth century, despite its similarity to many practices that characterized twentieth century literature, such as the modernist collage, Dadaism, and the Cut-up poetry—techniques with many affinities to ancient centonic poetry. Sampling is not uncommon in popular authorships such as T.S. Eliot and Umberto Eco; yet, scholars tended to continually assert that the cento form was alien to 'modern taste'. This difference should make us reflect upon the gap between reception in creative and academic contexts: The aversion towards centos in the learned reception is linked to its approach to ancient literature from the classical period in general. As Georgia Nugent has remarked, Ausonius' centonization of Virgil in his *Nuptial Cento* displays an intimacy with the Roman poet that is not shared by modern scholars for whom his texts in a sense are "closed domain". This brings us back to the letter of Jerome and the question of why his remarks on centos have been interpreted as aesthetical and moral judgments although he rather seems to be concerned with dogmatic issues: The

Church Father is made spokesman for the indignation experienced by scholars confronted with Proba's appropriation of Virgil and invoked in order to legitimize their own opinion.

CHAPTER 3

Proba in the Republic of Women

> Hic matrona fuit, ortis que lecta remotis,
> vimineis calathis templo aurea poma sacravit.
>
> a matron was bearing a white-bound basket of golden | Apples from far-off orchards, brought to the temple in tribute.
>
> *Pastoral Poem* 10.322–323, ed. and transl. BERGIN 1974, 174–175

The protagonist in Petrarch's *Laurea Occidens* finds a number of early Christian poets on the banks of the river Tiber. At first, he notices Arator, Prudentius and Sedulius, but is not overly impressed with their poetry: "there was no laurel | nor ivy nor myrtle nor any green for a garland, nor zealous | Cult of the Muses, and voices were weak" (10.319–321). After this, two women catch his eye; one of them is Proba, standing by a temple where she is about to offer her golden apples.[1] This conceptualization of Proba's poetic act stands in stark contrast to Elizabeth Barrett Browning's essay where she is made responsible for Eudocia's pulling Homer's gold to pieces (pp. 69–70). The two examples illustrate a pervasive divide in metaphors applied to centos in critical discourse: the centonist either assembles and cleverly organizes Virgil's verses or violently tears his texts apart. We encountered several examples of the latter opinion in the previous chapter,[2] but as we now move on to the reception of

1 Cf. Martellotti 1968, 79–80.

2 Cf. also Salisbury 2004, 82: "The poet's choice of *cento* style allows him to create a new work that literally embodies themes of fragmentation and disintegration, to inscribe the effects of violence in the very body of his poem"; Hardie 2007, 170; 171: "the cento also practices an extreme violence on the master-text, reducing the integrity of its body to *disiecti membra poetae* […] the imitator asserts his own authorial personality through the violence done to the model text, whose fragments are recombined into something that becomes the property of the cento author."

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Proba's *Cento* grounded in a positive assessment of the text, the former perspective will be more common.

The Cento in the Merovingian Kingdoms

Two of the oldest manuscripts containing the text derive from the abbey of Corbie that was founded in the mid-seventh century by the Merovingian queen Balthild († 680). She made her son, Clothar III († 670), its patron and relocated monks from Luxeuil abbey that had been founded by the Irish missionary Saint Columbanus in 585–590 to the new institution. Through this royal support, Corbie had the resources to build up a library a century before the Carolingian era.[3] Two Proba manuscripts (Par. lat. 13048 and Par. lat. 7701) are written in the so-called 'a-b script', named after its characteristic letters. There are thirty-five such manuscripts preserved today and they all date from between 790 and 830. These were preserved in the monastery of Corbie, but partly produced elsewhere.[4] The location of this external scriptorium has not been firmly established, but it has been suggested that it may have been the nunnery of Notre-Dame of Soissons under the abbess Theodrade († before 840), sister of Adelhard († 827), who was abbot of Corbie. Other possible locations are the nunneries in Jouarres or Chelles,[5] the latter founded by Balthild, who also retired there at the end of her life.[6]

In both Corbie manuscripts, Proba's text is grouped with works by the Latin poet and bishop of Poitiers, Venantius Fortunatus († 600). In Par. lat. 13048, her poem is found with a unique Fortunatus collection that might be a direct or indirect copy of the poet's redaction.[7] This collection includes poems by Fortunatus to his friend and patron, the Merovingian queen Saint Radegund († 587), and to Agnes, the abbess in Radegund's convent in Poitiers († after 587). Unlike other works by Fortunatus, the collection seems not to have been

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3 Jones 1947, 191, 193; Ganz 1990, 14–15; Fouracre and Gerberding 1996, 109–110.

4 Jones 1947[2], 376–377; Ganz 1990, 48–56.

5 There is an 'a-b' annotation on fol. 2^r and 158^v of Par. lat. 12205 (6th–7th c.), which is believed to have belonged to a nunnery before it came to Corbie: "domine iehsu christe inlumina cor ancille tue"; see McKitterick 1992, 18–20.

6 Fouracre and Gerberding 1996, 108–109.

7 Paris, BnF, lat. 13048. The *Cento* of Proba is found on fols. 31^v–38^v, and the Venantius Fortunatus collection on fols. 39^r–46^v; Delisle 1863, 86; cf. also Schenkl 1888, 517. Cf. Koebner 1915, 128–130; Lapidge 1996, 399–400.

widely disseminated, perhaps because the poems were written slightly before or after the deaths of the addressees.[8] Furthermore, two letters in the collection are written in the name of Radegund: *The Fall of Thuringia*, which is addressed to her cousin Hamalafred, and the *Letter to Artachis*, directed to her nephew. They both lived in exile in Constantinople, having fled the sack of Thuringia by the Franks in 531.[9] Since these texts are sorted under the name of Fortunatus in their only source, a manuscript in Paris,[10] some scholars have concluded that they where written by Fortunatus who assumes the persona of Radegund writing to her relatives.[11] Others suggest that they were indeed written by Radegund, but edited by Fortunatus. To my mind, it seems rather far-fetched to assume Fortunatus' authorship, especially since other texts indicate that Radegund did write poetry. In an epigram, the bishop praises her poetic skills:

> In brevibus tabulis mihi carmina magna dedisti,
> quae vacuis ceris reddere mella potes:
> multiplices epulas per gaudia festa ministras,
> sed mihi plus avido sunt tua verba cibus:
> versiculos mittis placido sermone refectos,
> in quorum dictis pectora nostra ligas.
>
> On small tablets you have given me great poetry, you who are able to make honey on empty wax; you furnish many courses in festive rejoicing, but your words are food for my even greater hunger: you offer a few lines composed with gentle speech, and by their words you bind my heart.
>
> FORTUNATUS, appendix 31.1–6 [LEO 1881, 290], transl. GEORGE 1992, 199

Fortunatus elegantly declares that his heart is bound by the "great poems" offered to him by Radegund; yet, only three of her poems have survived and two of them are found in the Paris manuscript where *The Fall of Thuringia* follows

8 George 1992, 211. Cf. Pucci 2010, xxix–xxx.

9 In *De excidio Thoringiae*: "Hamalafred, I was your Radegund" (*Hamalafrede, tibi tunc Radegundis eram*, 48); In *Ad Artachin*: "Should I, Radegund, ask after so long time?" (*sic Radegundis enim post tempora longa requiror?* 13); cf. Cherewatuk 1993, 21, 41–42, n. 3; Stevenson 1995, 87–88.

10 *De excidio Thoringiae*, in Par. lat. 13048 (8th–9th century) 39^r–42^v; *Ad Artachin*, in Par. lat. 13048, 45^r–46^v; in Leo 1881, 271–275, 278–279; for English transl. see McNamara et al. 1992, 65–70 and Thiébaux 1994, 95–101.

11 George 1992, 163–165. See discussion in Cherewatuk 1993, 41–42, n. 3 and Stevenson 1995, 87–88; 536.

directly after the *Cento* of Proba. The codicological connection between the *Cento*, Fortunatus and Radegund may be more than a mere coincidence: In a letter to Radegund, there is a verse that has been interpreted as an allusion to Proba's text.[12] Addressing his "mother", the poet writes that he is sending her plums and asks her not to neglect what the woods has given to him:

> Hoc quoque non metuas quod ramo umbrante pependit:
> non tellus fungos, sed dedit arbor opes.
> non ego crudelis, qui matri incongrua praestem;
> ne dubites puros sumere fauce cibos.
>
> And to not be afraid of what hung from a shading branch: | the earth did not give mushrooms but the tree gave riches. | I am not so cruel as to offer my mother what is unfitting; | do not hesitate to swallow this pure food.
>
> FORTUNATUS 11.18.5–8 [LEO 1881, 266]

The hemistich *ramo … pependit* refers to a swarm of bees settling in a laurel tree in Latinus' palace in the *Aeneid* (7.67). In Proba's *Cento*, however, the hemistich *ramo … pependit* describes the serpent in the Garden of Eden, hanging from a tree (*Cento* 176). Thus the phrase in Fortunatus' letter could be read as an allusion to the serpent that lured Eve to eat the forbidden fruit. In a playful and allusive way, the poet assures Radegund that his fruit, unlike the false serpent in the Garden of Eden, has no destructive force. This allusion has been regarded as an indicium of Fortunatus and Radegund reading Proba,[13] which would explain why the *Cento* is found with this private redaction. Furthermore, it may not be coincidental that both manuscripts were copied in Corbie, an abbey founded by Balthild, who lived a few generations after the Frankish queen. Balthild's *vita*, written by an anonymous nun in Chelles, shares many features with Venantius Fortunatus' biography on Radegund, who was a model for many Frankish women,[14] and perhaps this reflects an early tradition of female readers.

The other Proba manuscript from Corbie (Par. lat. 7701) has been separated from its original codex, which is now in Saint Petersburg.[15] The Saint Petersburg

12 Roberts 2009, 296.
13 Roberts 2009, 296 and 321, n. 114.
14 Coon 1997, 126–127, 134–135.
15 Saint Petersburg, Public Library, F. V. XIV. 1 8–9th c.; Schenkl 1888, 518; Dobias–Rozdest-

manuscript contains some poems by Venantius Fortunatus and his *Life of Saint Martin*, but otherwise it is mainly composed by texts associated with insular scholars,[16] which has been explained by the fact that Corbie was influenced and inhabited by many Englishmen; Balthild herself was of Anglo-Saxon origin. Although it is written in 'a-b'-script, the manuscript is also connected to the abbey of Saint Riquier. It contains an epitaph on the Irish scholar Caidocus, who died in the seventh century, signed by the abbot Angilbert († 814), and a collection of papal epitaphs of Saint Riquier.[17] Some scholars have even speculated that this is the manuscript listed in the library catalogue of Saint Riquier from 831,[18] which was compiled on the request of Louis the Pious (c. 778–840)[19] and included by the monk Hariulf († 1143) in his chronicle of the abbey of Saint Riquier.[20] But the only texts in the manuscript that correspond to the *libri grammaticorum* of the catalogue are the *Cento* and some poems by Venantius Fortunatus. The other texts are treatises on meter, rhetorics, early Christian poetry (Prosper, Arator, Sedulius, Juvencus, Avianus) and two of Virgil's *Eclogues*.[21] Our manuscript (Par. lat. 7701), on the other hand, contains the riddles of Saint Boniface († 753), Aldhelm and the fourth century collection of riddles sorted under the name Symphosius.

Furthermore, a manuscript of this content is listed in the Corbie catalogue of the twelfth century, which also makes it more plausible that Corbie lent it to the abbey of Saint Riquier and not the other way around.[22] In either case, it is interesting to note that Fortunatus' poems and Proba's *Cento* were listed together in the catalogue, which may be seen as a third testimony that Proba was transmitted with Venantius Fortunatus in this tradition.

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vensky 1931, 26–28; Jones 1947[2], 378, n. 19; de Merindol 1976, 1043–1046; Ganz 1990, 142; Kilpiö and Kahlas-Tarkka 2001, 50–53.

16 Boniface, *Enigmata*; Aldhelm, *De Virginitate* and *Enigmata*; Symphosius, *Enigmata*; cf. Dobias–Rozdestvensky 1931, 27–28; de Merindol 1976, 1043–1046; Kilpiö and Kahlas-Tarkka 2001, 52–53.

17 Lapidge 1996, 359–360; Kilpiö and Kahlas-Tarkka 2001, 52–53; Sharpe 2005, 173–174.

18 See McKitterick 1989, 177; others prefer Par. lat. 13048, Traube 1891, 225–227; See discussion in Jones 1947[2], 378, n. 22.

19 McKitterick 1989, 161.

20 See the edition in Lot 1894, 86–97, esp. 93; Becker 1885, 24–29, esp. 28; Glauche 1970, 28–30.

21 Edwards 1859, 300.

22 Becker 1885, 281.

Early Anglo-Saxon Reception

The third of the three oldest direct textual witnesses to Proba's *Cento* derives from the abbey of Lorsch (Pal. lat. 1753). It is one of twenty-five manuscripts from Richbod's scriptorium that were all copied in the last two decades of the eighth century and the first of the ninth, when Lorsch was still a rather new institution (founded in 764). The manuscript is written in an early Carolingian minuscule from the time when Adalung († 837) was abbot at Lorsch and the scriptorium was flourishing.[23] The manuscript is famous for its collection of riddles, called the Lorsch riddles or *Aenigmata Anglica*. This is a collection of twelve riddles that were composed in imitation of Aldhelm dating to the turn of the eighth century. It is also the unique source of Boniface's theological riddles. In the middle of these, there is an excerpt from Isidore's *Etymologies* and an epitaph of 32 verses dedicated to a certain Dombercht, an Anglo-Saxon priest who studied for Boniface in Nhutscelle (today Nursling), and who later taught at Lorsch.[24] Wallace Lindsay has conjectured that the exemplar of Pal. lat. 1753 was brought to Lorsch in connection to Boniface leaving England in 718 to go on mission on the continent.[25] It contains corrections and annotations in Anglo-Saxon minuscules,[26] and has no line breaks separating the individual verses, which is typical of medieval Anglo-Saxon manuscripts from before the eighth century.[27] Michael Lapidge has argued that the mere fact that it included Aldhelm's introductory book *On Meters* "implies *per se* an Anglo-Saxon exemplar".[28] In this context, it is interesting to note that Aldhelm, the first Anglo-Saxon poet to write extensive works on Latin verse, made a positive comment on Proba's *Cento* in *On the Rules of Metrical Feet*:[29]

> … unde Proba inter poetas clarissima in exordio Vergiliocentonis quamvis apocriforum frivola sub specie prophetica continentis, sed tamen legitimam exametri regulam servantis eleganter deprompsit dicens "Iam dudum temerasse duces pia foedera pacis".

23 Lindsay 1922–1929, 45–47; McKitterick 2004, 197. On Pal. lat. 1753, see Pellegrin and Fohlen 1982, 400–404; cf. Bischoff 1974, 65.

24 Dümmler 1878, 262.

25 Lindsay 1922–1929, 45–47; cf. also Law 1997, 95–96; Lapidge 2006, 37–40.

26 Lapidge 2003, 127–128.

27 O'Brian O'Keeffe 1990, 23.

28 Lapidge 2003, 127.

29 On Aldhelm and meter see Lapidge 1979, 211–212.

> … whence Proba, most famous woman among poets, in the introduction to her *Vergiliocento*, though comprising trifles of apocryphal writing under the guise of prophecy, but nevertheless observing the correct rule of the hexameter, produced an elegant example when saying: “For a long time leaders had defiled the holy compacts of peace.”
>
> *On the Rules of Metrical Feet*, ed. and transl. ZIOLKOWSKI and PUTNAM 2008, 94

We may conclude that Proba’s *Cento* circulated in England and perhaps Canterbury in the seventh century:[30] Aldhelm was educated there by Hadrian the African († 709/10) and Theodore of Tarsus († 690). Theodore was of Greek origin and migrated to Rome in 668 after upheavals in the eastern parts and was then sent to Canterbury where he was made Archbishop. The *Laterculus Malalianus*, which is a rewriting of the Greek chronicle of John Malalas († 578) into a historical–typological exegesis of the life of Christ, has been attributed to him. This is one of the very few surviving literary works of the seventh century in Canterbury and thus valuable for understanding this intellectual culture. It is particularly interesting to note here that it frequently includes Virgilian half-lines, at several occasions carrying out the same centonization of Virgil as the *Cento* of Proba. As in the *Passion of Saint Eugenia* (pp. 60–61), Eve is described as having “the chest of a virgin” (*pectore virgo*). This half-verse describes Scylla in the *Aeneid* (3.426) but Eve in the *Cento* (130–131).[31] There are some indications that pagan poets were rarely read in Canterbury,[32] which would have given Proba and the other Christian high-style Latin poets a privileged position in class when teaching Latin verse. Her text seems to have maintained its place in the educational system at Canterbury for some time and is found listed in the catalogue of the library of the Benedictine monastery of Christ Church in Canterbury from the end of the thirteenth or the beginning of the fourteenth century.[33] Her text is also found in a fourteenth century manuscript from the abbey of Saint Augustine in Canterbury.[34]

We can discern a clear influence of the manuscript Pal. lat. 1753 (or of its exemplar). One ninth-century manuscript, now in Valenciennes (BM 395),

30 Cf. Lapidge 2003, 127, n. 41.

31 Stevenson 1995, 57, 71–72, 86 and 208–209; Stevenson 2005, 70.

32 Stevenson 2005, 70–71.

33 See Edwards 1859, 137.

34 Cambridge, St John’s College, D. 22 (97), 14th c., see James 1913, 126–129; Barker-Benfield 2008, 967–969; cf. also Rouse and Rouse 1976, 455.

appears to be a copy of it or of its source,[35] containing the same kind of ancient *notae* (system of abbreviation) and following the glosses and textual variants of Pal. lat. 1753.[36] This manuscript was copied in the scriptorium of Saint Amand, under the abbacy of Arn († 821). It was later owned by the scholar and musicologist Hucbald of Saint Amand († 930), who was trained in Saint Amand but taught at the abbeys of Saint Bertin and Rheims before he retired to Saint Amand. At the end of his life, he donated his books to this monastery and one of them contained Proba's *Cento* together with the fourth century grammarian Marius Victorinus' *The Art of Grammar*, a list over incipits from Horace's *Odes* and *Epodes* and Aldhelm's treatise on meter, which corresponds to the texts in the Valencienne manuscript.[37] Another ninth century manuscript of French origin (according to an inscription it belonged to the abbey of Saint Bénigne in Dijon),[38] now in the Vatican library (Reg. lat. 251), follows the text and glosses in Pal. lat. 1753. Both could also be connected to an eleventh century manuscript of French origin, now in the Vatican library (Reg. lat. 1666) that has similar textual variants as Reg. lat. 251 and contains the full texts of Horace's *Odes* and *Epodes*.

In conclusion, early direct textual witnesses suggest that the *Cento* circulated from early on in Canterbury, where it seems to have been used for the study of Latin meter and as a model for Christian exegetical poetry. Products of these uses of Proba then spread to the continent.

Ars Grammatica and the Carolingians

By the end of the ninth century, the Benedictine abbey of Reichenau had the largest library in the Carolingian Empire with more than four hundred books. They were recorded in the oldest Carolingian library catalogue that was compiled in 821 by the scholar and librarian Reginbert († 846).[39] His inventory includes the *Cento* of Proba, grouped with poems by ancient Christian poets

35 Bischoff 1994, 117, and 63–64: "it is possible that a new examination would show them to be sister manuscripts which slavishly reproduce many obsolete and therefore incomprehensible *notae antiquae* in a similar way."

36 Lindsay 1916, 272: "One or two of the ancient Notae have actually survived into this 'second remove' from the archetype, especially on the pages where they stood in clear contrast to the neighboring words."

37 McKitterick 1990, 29 n. 76: "The books given by Hucbald were recorded in the twelfth-century catalogue of the libraray of Saint Amand, BN, lat 1850, fols. 199^v–202^v."

38 Wilmart 1945, 1–6, esp. 3; Pellegrin 1978, 55–57, esp. 57.

39 Duckett 1962, 123.

as well as theoretical treatises on meter and grammar under the title *De Libris Prisciani*.[40] This heading does not correspond literally with the titles in the list, since it contains works of Priscian as well as various texts on grammar and rhetoric and collections of poetry, Christian and pagan (in that order).[41] These are texts that correspond to the *libri scolastici* in later catalogues.[42] The Reichenau manuscript from the early ninth century is lost, but there is a tenth century Proba manuscript deriving from this abbey that is now in the library of Karlsruhe, which belongs to the same family as a ninth century manuscript from the abbey of Saint Gall, now in Zürich (Zentralbibliothek, C 68). They both contain texts of and about Sedulius and Juvencus, poets forming part of the canon of Christian poets that were read as part of the *Ars Grammatica*, the systematic study of Latin language and literature.[43] The final objective of grammar—as with all seven liberal arts divided in the *trivium* (grammar, rhetoric and dialectic) and *quadrivium* (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music)—was to understand and interpret the Scriptures.[44] Therefore, Proba and the Christian poets naturally served the purpose better than the pagan poets that needed to be read with caution. In Saint Gall, the poet and teacher Notker Balbulus († 912) wanted to replace the fables of Aesop with the poems of Prudentius, since he found the Christian poets to be more suitable for youth than pagan poetry.[45] The function of the ancient Christian poets was to teach Latin and to prepare the students for studying the Scriptures and, since they served this purpose better than the pagan poets, they ocassionally replaced them.[46] Martin Irvine explain their success by arguing that they transferred the "prestige" of the classical Latin literature into the Christian textual community and at the same time assumed the function of commentaries on the Scripture given that they tend to embody exegetical practices such as allegory and typology.[47] This kind of use of the *Cento* is found in two manuscripts (Laon 279 and 273) that belonged to the scholar Martin the Irishman (c. † 875) and

40 Juvencus, Sedulius, Bede, Aldhelm and Virgil (who would count as a pre-Christian poet); Becker 1885, 12–13; Glauche 1970, 23–24; cf. also McKitterick 1989, 179–182.

41 They were more commonly divided in prose or in verse; cf. Scrivner 1980, 435.

42 Bischoff 1994, 97.

43 Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Aug. 217, 9–10th c., see Holder 1906, 493–498; cf. also Springer 1995, 57–58.

44 Irvine 1994, 5–7; Grotans 2006, 23–28, esp. 24.

45 Clark 1926, 101–102; Grotans 2006, 72–73.

46 Scrivner 1980, 440; Bischoff 1994, 103.

47 Irvine 1994, 364–371.

both formed part of the curriculum in the Cathedral school of Laon.[48] Here, the first half of the poem is included with poetical, exegetical and historical texts more or less related to *Genesis*.

A recent study has shown that the Christian poets were studied at the secondary level of grammatica in Saint Gall, and that the works were mainly used to illustrate the rules of grammar and prosody as a part of exercises in learning Latin, e.g. transforming verse into prose and prose into verse.[49] The study of meter and poetry appears to have constituted an important part of the intermediate curriculum.[50] The *Cento* was probably put to use in this context since it is found with Aldhelm's treaties *On Meters* in two manuscripts from before the tenth century, as seen above.[51]

In conclusion, the *Cento* often played a part in the education in Latin during the Carolingian era. The early manuscripts and catalogues indicate that her text was used when studying the Latin language, generally found not together with but instead of the Virgilian poems. Its hypertextual link with Virgil appears to have been less important than its status as a Bible epic. There are, however, a few examples—the Laon manuscripts—where the hypertextual reconfiguration of *Genesis* is appreciated from an exegetical point of view.

Proba and Virgil in the Later Middle Ages

In the later medieval manuscripts, the *Cento* tends not to be grouped with other early Christian poets and treatises on meter and grammar.[52] One tendency is to present it along with various cosmological texts, seemingly appreciated as an ancient account of the creation of the world as earlier in the Laon-manuscripts. In a tenth century manuscript, now in Leiden, and in a thirteenth century manuscript preserved in Brussels,[53] it is found with the fifth century

48 Contreni 1978, 37–38, n. 30, 40, 67–68, n. 8. On Martin the Irishman and the manuscripts he brought to Laon, see 112–113 and 157–159.

49 Clark 1926, 104–105; Grotans 2006, 76–77.

50 Grotans 2006, 78.

51 Pal. lat. 1753, 8–9th c., see Pellegrin and Fohlen 1982, 400–404; Valenciennes, Bibliothèque Municipale, 395, 9th c., see Mangeart 1860, 368–369; Delisle 1874, 448–458, esp. 454; Munk Olsen 1982, 520; see also Reg. lat. 251, 9th c., see Wilmart 1945 1–6, esp. 1–3; Pellegrin 1978, 55–57; Buonocore 1992, 122–123.

52 With the exception of Par. lat. 14758, 13th c., see Delisle 1869, 46; Ouy and Gerz-von Buren 1983, 8–9; cf. also Springer 1995; Laur. plut. 23.15, 15th c., see De Robertis et al. 2008, 57–58, where it is found with other early Christian poets.

53 Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, 10038–10053 (978), 13th c., Proba's *Cento* is found on

author Macrobius' commentary on *The Dream of Scipio*, Cicero's story about the Roman general Scipio's cosmic dream vision in the last book of *On the Republic*. The theme of the creation of the world and its mysteries is also present in two thirteenth century manuscripts in which her text is found with Bernard Silvester's (c. † 1159) *Cosmography*.[54] In this account, inspired by Platonic and Neo-Platonic cosmology, the formation of the macrocosm (the greater universe) is mirrored in the microcosm (the lesser universe), which is the formation of human beings. Silvester's contemporary Alan of Lille (c. † 1203) drew on the ideas of the *Cosmography* in his didactic allegoric epic works *The Complaint of Nature* and *The Anticlaudian*. These three treatises were frequently studied in twelfth-century cathedral schools and were epochmaking for the culture that emerged during this era.[55] It is worth noting that three medieval copies of the *Cento* are found in manuscripts along with *The Anticlaudian*,[56] and one with extracts from *The Complaint of Nature*.[57] In total five of the twelve existing manuscripts from between the tenth and the thirteenth century contain one or several of the above-mentioned works with more or less extensive treatises on cosmology. Furthermore, these and other texts in the same genre are found in a number of later manuscripts as well.[58] This grouping of the *Cento*, which stands

fols. 1^r–11^r; Alanus de Lille's *Anticlaudianus* on fols. 97^r–144^v; Macrobius commentary on *Somnium Scipionis* on fols. 146^r–176^r. Thereafter follows two astrological diagrams on f. 176^v, see see Van den Gheyn 1901, 50–52; Leiden Q 2:3, The *Cento* of Proba is found on 26^r–30^r, Macrobius commentary on *Somnium Scipionis* on 3^r–25^v and extracts from Macrobius *Saturnalia* on 31^r–33^r, see de Meyier 1975, 6–12, esp. 8–9.

54 Cambridge, Trinity College Library, O. 7.7, 13th c., Bernardus Silverstris' *Cosmographia* is found on 1^r–25^v and the *Cento* of Proba on 28^r–37^r, see James 1902, 348–350; Stock 1972, 152–154; Weimar, Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek, Q111, 13th c., Alanus de Lille's *Anticlaudianus* is found on 1^r–55^v and Bernardus Silvestris *Cosmographia* on 55^v–76^r; 84^v–85^r; the *Cento* of Proba was inserted in the middle of Silvestris' text on 76^v–84^r, see http://www.manuscripta-mediaevalia.de/hs/projekt-Weimar-pdfs/Q-111.pdf

55 Jaeger 1994, 172–179; 280–291.

56 Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, 10038–10053, 13th c.; Weimar, Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek, Q111, 13th c.; Laur. plut. 91sup.36, 15th c.

57 London, BL, Cotton Vespasian B XXIII, 14th c., Proba's *Cento* is found on 77^v–83^v and Alanus of Lille's *De Planctu Naturae* on 84^r–110^v, see Ward and Herbert 1883, 33; Ker 1941, 119; Humphreys 1990, 124.

58 London, British Museum, Harley 1895, 15th c., see *Catalogue of the Harleian manuscripts in the British Museum* 1808, 315; Milan, Biblioteca Pinacoteca Accademia Ambrosiana, G 111, 15th c., Inf, see Ceruti 1975, 138–139; Pellegrin 1959, 445–448; Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 526, 15th c., see Halm, K. and Laubmann, G. 1892, 148–149; Philadelphia, PA, University of Pennsylvania Library, 105, 16th c., see Kristeller 1990, 374a; Zacour et al. 1965, 23.

out as a trend in manuscripts from this period, suggests new appropriations of the text focusing on the way it expresses the cosmological matters.

During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the *Cento* began to be grouped with authors of the classical era as well as contemporary Renaissance texts. In particular, the importance of the *Cento*'s hypertextual relationship with Virgil and the presentation of the Roman poet as a Christian *ante litteram* increases in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century manuscripts,[59] and even more so in the century after that.[60] Rather than replacing Virgil in educational contexts, or reading it as a biblical paraphrase, the text became auxiliary in the reading of Virgil's works.[61] For instance, in a fifteenth-century manuscript, we find the *Cento* in a collection of texts related to the teaching of Virgil, with allegorical commentaries and a copy of Albertino Mussato's *The Tragedy of Ecerinis*.[62] This is of particular interest since there had been a debate on Proba between Mussato and Giovannino of Mantua in the early fourteenth century. The latter invoked Jerome's purported critique of the *Cento* in a letter to Paulinus of Nola and disagreed with Mussato's view that the poem proved that Virgil was a pre-Christian prophet (pp. 62–63). But in the same spirit as Mussato, a fourteenth-century catalogue from Saint Augustine's abbey in Canterbury represents her text as a "book of the prophets prophesying of Christ" (*liber … de prophetii*[*s*] *prophetantibus de christo*).[63] This branch of interpretation of Proba as a Sibyl, and Virgil as her Christian oracle, culminates in Filippo Barbieri's book from 1481 where he monumentally represents her as a Christian Sibyl and her *Cento* as evidence of Virgil's foreknowledge about the new religion (pp. 24–25). The treatise is divided into four sections, where the first part treats differences between the doctrines of Jerome and Augustine and their thoughts on the prophets of "the old world". Jerome certainly refuted the possibility

59 New Haven, Yale University Library, 700, 13th c.; Saint Petersburg, Library of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Q 433, 14th c.; London, British Library, Harley 4967, 13th c.; Vicenza, Biblioteca Civica Bertoliana, 507, 14th c.

60 London, BL, Arundel, 82, 1450–1492; Colmar, BM 293, 15th c.; Copenhagen, University Library, E. Donat Var 18, 15th c.; Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale, F. I V.7, 15th c.; Vat. lat. 1586, 15th c.; Urb. lat. 353, 15th c; Copenhagen, Royal Library, NKS 159, 15th c.; Milan, Biblioteca Pinacoteca Accademia Ambrosiana, G 111, Inf., 15th c.; Zwickau, Rathschulbibliothek, XIII, II, 5, 1485–1486; Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek 367, 15th c.; Zaragoza, Biblioteca del Seminario Sacerdotal de San Carlos, A. 5–25, 15th c.

61 Cf. Cazes 1998, 272–273.

62 Milan, Biblioteca Pinacoteca Accademia Ambrosiana, G 111 Inf; see Ceruti 1975, 138–139; Pellegrin 1959, 445–448; cf. also Ziolkowski and Putnam 2008, 773; Moretti 2010, 287–290.

63 Barker-Benfield 2008, 2, 967–969, esp. 269.

that Virgil could have been a Christian, but Augustine did not exclude this. Based on his authority, Barbieri continues in the second section by listing and describing twelve Sibyls who proclaimed the coming of Christ.[64] Towards the end of the exposition, Barbieri announces that he intends to affirm the credibility of the prophecies of the Sibyls by supplying his reader with further evidence, represented in "the verses of the woman Proba Centona of divine intelligence". This book became influential and was reprinted four times within the subsequent 32 years,[65] and we have at least one manuscript copy of it.[66] It also raised certain objections: In the preface to an edition from 1497 in Leipzig, dictated in Sélestat by Marcus Brandis to his students, the editor begins with refuting the Christian Virgil: "Do not think, avid reader, that Virgil was a Christian", and underlines that there is an essential difference between poetry and prophetic inspiration.[67] A similar kind of warning is found in an edition from 1514, where Jacob Köbel contests the view of Virgil as a proto-Christian seer and Proba as his mouthpiece.[68] In order to inform his readers of what a cento truly is, this editor quoted the preface of Ausonius to his *Nuptial Cento*. This text had started to be associated with that of Proba after they had been printed together in their first edition from 1472.[69] In its preface, Ausonius presents the cento form as being suitable for humorous subjects; it does not raise admiration and makes one "laugh rather than praise" (*ridere magis quam laudare*). Clearly, this is not a general characterization of centos, but rather a justification of Ausonius' own ludic and erotic poem, a sort of *captatio benevolentiae*, which is a rather typical feature in late antique literary prefaces.[70] Since Proba's text, in contrast to Ausonius', makes Virgil loftier and more sacred, reading her *Cento* through the lens of Ausonius' preface effectively reduced its seriousness; it has been suggested that the pairing of

64 Cf. Cazes 1998, 326–327.

65 Herolt and Riessinger (Rome 1482); Benali (Venice 1495); Köbel (Oppeheim 1517 [1514]).

66 Bergamo, Biblioteca Civica Angelo Mai, MA 472.

67 Cazes 1998, 320.

68 Köbel (Oppenheim 1517 [1514]).

69 The first edition of Proba's *Cento*—Girardini (Venice 1472)—includes the Nuptial Cento of Ausonius and other Latin non-Christian literary texts, such as ps.-Ovid, Calpurnius Sicculus, and the contemporary author Gregorius Tiphernas († c. 1461). It was reprinted three times the following years, cf. Cazes 1998, 311–312. The same collection is found in an Italian 15th century manuscript copied for Federico da Montefeltro (†1482), famous humanist in Urbino, between 1474 and 1482 (Urb. lat. 353, see Pellegrin and Fohlen 1982, 562–568). Probably copied from Girardino's edition (Venice 1472) or its exemplar.

70 McGill 2005, 7.

these two texts pushed the definition of the cento genre from the religious towards the profane.[71] Yet, this change was gradual rather than uniquitous and definitive. For instance, in his French translation of the *Cento* (Lyon 1557), the calivinist Pardoux Duprat (1520–1569) highlights the biblical connotations of the text, plays down the pagan references and adds paratexts that emphasize the Christian message.[72] In Henri Estienne's treatise on centos from 1575, he quotes Ausonius' preface but goes on to assert that the subject of Proba's *Cento* was preferable to that of the Gallic poet.[73] And as we shall see in the following, Proba's poem was considered useful and valuable in a number of contexts in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Aldus' 'Rediscovery'

Between the fourteenth- and sixteenth century, the *Cento* of Proba was repeatedly repackaged and associated with new fashions, which may have contributed to its long-lived survival on the book-market.[74] Aldus Manutius (c. 1450–1515) printed the text along with other early Latin Christian poems in his anthology *Ancient Christian Poets* in 1501 and 1502, without any mention of Virgil. It is dedicated to Daniele Clario, a scholar from Parma who taught as a professor in the Republic of Raguse, Dubrovnic. In the dedicatory epistle, Aldus mentions troubles that delayed the completion of the edition, believing it to be the work of "evil demons". But he persisted, he claims, since he wanted Christian and not pagan poets to be read in schools, so that the "fragile spirits" of children would be taught goodness. Moreover, Aldus claims that these poets had been forgotten for more than a thousand years. As we have seen, this is far from true and rather reveals a desire to "discover" ancient poetry that was typical in the

71 Cazes 1998, 309–317, esp. 316–317; see Manutius (Venice 1501); Köbel (Oppenheim 1517 [1514]); Braubach (Frankfurt 1541); Estienne (1575).

72 Clément 2012, 166, 184–189.

73 Estienne 1575, 69: "But what do we say about the *Centos* of Proba Falconia? With regard to the subject, it is true that we certainly prefer her work to that of Ausonius. Indeed, we confess that in this aspect the one should not even be compared to the other." (*At de Probae Falconiae Centonibus quid dicemus? Ad argumentum quidem certè quod attinet, est quòd eius opus Ausoniano praeferamus, imò verò hac in parte ne comparari quidem hoc cum illo debere fateamur.*)

74 Cf. McKenzie 2002, 250: "the book trade is economically dependent upon ideas wearing out—on the dynamics of change."; Bland 2010, 13: "the printed book-trade depends on old books being worn out, on new fashions, and on older texts being packaged in new ways."

epoch, and for Aldus. He ascribed religious legitimacy to the *Cento*, not because it proved that Virgil was a Christian, but because it helped students to avoid the myths of the pagans, which may otherwise be taken as truth.[75] Aldus was thus reviving the reading practices of the early Middle Ages. His edition gained success and was reprinted in the subsequent year. Soon thereafter, the *Cento* was characterized as a pious work (*pium opus*) by the Venetian historian Marco Antonio Sabellico (1436–1506),[76] and was included in an edition with the writings of the Italian Carmelite reformer Baptista Mantuan (1447–1516).[77] In the same spirit, the dean John Colet (1467–1519) prescribed early Christian poets in the curriculum of Saint Paul's School in London in 1518: "Lactantius, Prudentius and Proba, and Sedulius, and Juvencus and Baptista Mantuanus."[78] Colet emphasized the necessity of Christian morals in the schools, and like Aldus, he argued that these poems would prevent the students from exposure to "obscenities" that they risked to encounter in pagan poetry, and he emphasized the advantage of teaching them "true" Latin: These poets joined wisdom with pure and chaste eloquence.[79] The statutes of Saint Paul served as a model for a range of schools in the area, and it is likely that Proba's *Cento* became a part of the standard education in England in the time to follow.[80]

Cento and *Imitatio*: Erasmus, Montaigne and Estienne

Portents of later critiques of the cento-form as insufficiently original can be found around the turn of the sixteenth century, but modifications and arguments against this position are also offered. In a letter by Erasmus of Rotterdam to the Dutch editor Jacob Canter, Proba's poem is mentioned without praise. A copy of Canter's edition of the *Cento* (1489) had been sent to Erasmus on his request. Hoping to enjoy Canter's great learning of which he had heard, Erasmus was disappointed to find out that his publication was an edition of Proba's *Cento*: "When I began to study it, and at the same time discovered that Proba was indeed the author, it did not greatly attract me." He had to settle with the editor's paratexts: "However, your letter and prologues gave me such pleasure

75 Béné 2003, 272, 280; cf. also Piepho 1994, 66–67.
76 Sabellico 1535 (1504), 217.
77 Basignana (Lyon 1516).
78 Lupton 1887 (1837), 77; cf. also Staunton 1865, 184.
79 Lupton 1887 (1837), 77.
80 Burrow 2004, 11–12.

that though I read them over and over I was unable to exhaust my enjoyment; for I swear they display so much of the ancient style of eloquence and learning …".[81]

Erasmus was familiar with the cento form, which he described in *Adages* (2.4.58), a compilation of commented Latin proverbs where it is etymologically derived from the expression *Farcire Centones*, "To stuff a patchwork coat":

> Periphanes in the *Epidicus* of Plautus, when the soldier is preparing to recount the story of his battles, as soldiers will, observes 'Can't you find someone else for whom to stuff a patchwork coat?' meaning, whom you can fill to the full with your boasting and your lies and your patchwork of tall stories. Boastful men have a habit of stitching together a whole string of lies, with no end and no moderation. *Centones*, patchwork coats, are garments stitched together from various bits and pieces, sometimes of quite different colors. Juvenal: 'Entered the fetid brother in an ancient patchwork coat.'
>
> The analogy of these garments have given us the word 'cento' for a kind of poem made up of different poems and fragments of poems collected from many different sources and as it were stitched together. In Greek the word is *kentrōn*, with one extra letter which Latin rejects. There still exist the Homeric centos, referred to also by St Jerome, and the Virgilian cento of a woman called Proba, and the *Cento nuptialis* of Ausonius, who also lays down the principle of this kind of composition.
>
> ERASMUS in ed. Mynors 1991, 221–222

The second part of the passage, i.e. the actual description of the poetic form is unbiased, but since Erasmus begins by expanding on the negative connotations of the word *cento*, the reader is unlikely to pass to the second part with a positive preconception of this kind of poetry.

His critique is in no way explicit, but gathering from his theories on literary imitation in general, one may suspect that the Virgilian *Cento* of Proba did not make the top of his list. For Erasmus, literary imitation aught to be 'eclectic', have many different sources, and not reproduce the exact style of others. In a proverb he alludes to Seneca and advices potential authors to metaphorically

81 *Quod ubi lectitare coepi, simulque Probae esse comperi, non me magnopere cepit. Tua vero epistola ac prologi ita me delectarunt, ut iterum atque iterum lectitantis expleri animus nequiverit. Tantum enim mehercule veteris tum eloquentiae tum eruditionis prae se ferunt* … in ed. Allen (ed. 1906) 127; english transl. in ed. Ferguson (1974) 61.

imitate bees and gather pollen from many flowers asking: "Do bees collect the substance for making honey from just one shrub" (*apes num ex uno fructice colligunt mellificii materiam*). This rhetorical question epitomizes his standpoints on imitation: Proper literary imitation is based on several different sources that the author "inwardly digests" and thereafter "reproduces" to express himself. Echoing Quintillian, he argues that the author should follow the 'spirit' rather than the letter of the model text. Erasmus specifically taught that it was inappropriate to clothe Christian ideas in pagan dress and that "a mechanical, externalized classicism" was inconsistent with eloquence.[82] No wonder that Canter's edition of Proba's *Cento* made him disappointed: it matches all his criteria of bad imitation and lack of eloquence.

Yet looking at Michel de Montaigne (1533–1592), another humanist with a similar view on literary imitation, we will find a rather lenient perspective on centos. In a pro-Erasmian spirit,[83] Montaigne writes that he prefers when authors imitate and quote their sources in the service of self-expression and admits that this is the reason why he composed his *Essays*: "I have no other end in this writing, but only to discover myself". But this does not stand in objection to his view on cento writing. As pointed out by Irving Babbitt at the beginning of the twentieth century, the *Essays* themselves are composed in a centolike manner, and in his final additions to the *Essays* that were incorporated in the posthumous editions of this work, he mentions a few quite inventive contemporary centos in addition to the ancient ones in the chapter on the education of children:[84]

> For my part, I would do anything rather than that. I only quote others to make myself more explicit. This criticism does not apply to those *centos* which are published as such; and I have seen some very clever ones in my time, among them—not counting the ancients—one published under the name of Capilupus. There are talents that can reveal themselves as well in this way as in any other; Lipsius, for instance, in his learned and laborious compilation, the *Politics*.
>
> MONTAIGNE transl. COHEN 1958, 52

82 Gray 1992, 215–216.

83 Scholar 2010, 60–61.

84 Montaigne 1595, 81: "De ma part il n' est rien que ie vueille moins faire. Ie ne dis les autres, sinon pour d' autant plus me dire. Cecy ne touche pas les centons, qui se publient pour centons: & i' en ay veu de tres-ingenieux en mon temps: entre-autres vn, sous le nom de Capilupus: outre les anciens. Ce sont des esprits, qui se font veoir, & par ailleurs, & par là, comme Lipsius en ce docte & laborieux tissu de ses *Politiques*."

Montaigne makes a neat distinction between centos and plagiarism, which is his target here: authors who secretly deploy the cento-technique without admitting to it, that is what his initial comment is about. Erasmus and Montaigne do not explicitly reject the cento-form, but their objections to certain forms of imitation can nevertheless be regarded as the beginning of what would eventually grow into a more significant critique of the cento-form, but that would not be until hundreds of years later.

In the middle of the fifteenth century, the *Cento* was still highly reputed among learned men, not least since it offered its editors an opportunity to display their own erudition, which is reflected in the peritexts of several editions. In addition to Canter's, we find this in the edition of professor Hubert Sussaneau from 1543. This is the first edition with exact references to all the individual verses in the Virgilian works in the margins. In the preface, Sussanneau described how he and the critical editor Vincentus Brito searched for and found all the corresponding Virgilian verses and confesses that he very much enjoyed going over the poems of Virgil to find them.[85] The edition was made for students at Collège de Paris, Beauvais and Soisson, so apparently Sussaneau did not have problems with using Proba to lead his students to the Virgilian hypotext. His edition was the opposite to that of Aldus, who created one that lacked references to Virgil and was meant to keep the students away from Virgil's texts. In the same spirit as Sussaneau, professor Conrad Lycosthène dedicated his edition from 1546 to the student Samuel Pellican, whom he encouraged to learn Virgil well enough to "detect the stitches" in the *Cento*, which would otherwise be impossible.[86]

During the second half of the century, new poems were allotted more space in the editions. This trend exploded in connection with the publication of *Parodiae Morales* (1575), where Henri Estienne presented an extensive study of the cento form. He concurred with Julius Caesar Scaliger's assertion in his *Poetice* (1561) that centos are no different from parodies, since in both cases a new sense is drawn from the "first" meaning of the verse.[87] Estienne's hypothesis is that the literary effect of both these textual forms stem from

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85 Sussaneau 1543, 2. Cf. Cazes 1998, 335–336.

86 Cazes 1998, 107–108.

87 "The poems that are called centos are hardly different from parodies. A new sense is drawn from from the primary meaning of the verse, and thus reminds of the parodie. But since these pieces stich together fragments from verses gathered from here and there, the term rhapsody comes to mind. And they have therefore also been called centones after the "centones" these carpets are made by. There is a poem by Ausonius in this genre, of high ingenuity and wit, which is an assembly of Virgilian pieces. There is also another by the

their *accommodatio*, meaning that a verse or an expression is semantically adapted to a new context.[88]

> Plerosque enim versus in eo quem poeta illis dedit sensu usurpare non satis habentes, ad alium praeterea aut etiam ad alios convertimus et tanquam surculos ex arbore una in aliam inserimus, qui tamen in ea nati, non in eam insiti, videri possint. Atque huius versuum accommodationis duo fuerunt et nunc quoque sunt genera. Interdum enim ipsi versus ἀπαραποίητοι et quales ab aliquo poeta scripti fuerunt, interdum vero non tales, sed aliqua in parte παραπεποιημένοι usurpantur.
>
> Since we cannot be content with taking over most verses in the same sense that the poet used them, we also transform them into one or even several other meanings, and just like we graft shoots from one tree into another, so that although they are born in one tree may be seen grafted into another. There have been and still are two kinds of this accommodation of verses. For sometimes we take over the verses themselves unmutated and such as they were, but sometimes not in this form but mutated in some aspect.
>
> ESTIENNE 1575, 2.1

According to Estienne's model, the first of these two forms of *accommodatio*, when the verse stays intact, applies to centos and the second to parodies. Estienne called for the interaction of the reader: He published his own centos and parodies and left blank pages for the reader to fill out with his or her own specimens. Several editions of the *Cento* that followed after this book combine Proba's work with centos composed by the editors. Her text was widely known by the end of the sixteenth century, as Cazes shows in her study of the early modern reception of the cento form. She claims that the "great name of Proba" was found everywhere, especially in the writings of the

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Christian poet Proba, who receives the surname of Cento because of her work." (*Haud absimiles Parodiis, quos Centones vocant. Deducitur enim sensus alius ab sensu pristino versuum: hoc parodiam refert. quorum versuum membra hinc inde collecta quum affuantur, Rapsodiae nomen repraesentat. atque iccirco Centones appellati sunt à centonibus quibus fiunt stragula. Tale apud Ausonium poema valde ingeniosum et lepidum, ex frustis Virgilianis coagmentatum. Tale etiam Probae poetriae Christianae: cui ab opere Centone cognomen factum est*). Scaliger 1594 (1561), 116.

88 Cf. Cazes 1998, 1273–1276.

erudite, but goes on to argue that her text at this time was mainly used as a pedagogical tool and a stepping stone towards composing new centos. Since it was also suitable for teaching meter and sacred history, it appeared to be an ideal schooltext; but this very success of the *Cento*, Hélène Cazes suggests, led to its own destruction as it became a foundation for technical exercises of professors and students, and centos ceased to be regarded as 'real' literature.[89] To this historiographical narrative, we may object that it would in fact be very long before Proba's *Cento* really started to be 'condemned' (see chapter 2), and it is difficult to say exactly to what extent its creative reception among professors and editors of the sixteenth- and seventeenth centuries had an impact on this.

Reading Textual Patchwork

As previously observed (pp. 27–31), Proba's authorship gained in popularity in the 'Querelle des femmes'. Here we shall examine this reception of the *Cento* and its influence on the constitution of early-modern feminist discourse more closely, as well as to arguments in general involving the relationship between weaving and writing in this context. Proba began to be grouped with other women writers in the early Renaissance when Giovanni Boccaccio included her in his collection of 106 vignettes on women from ancient and medieval culture in *Famous Women*. This was the first literary work that exclusively dealt with women, but it nevertheless received mixed responses from later feminists due to Boccaccio's rather pessimistic stance.[90] Boccaccio praises Proba, but expresses amazement over the fact that it was a woman who came up with the excellent idea to write a Virgilian cento on a Christian theme, and even more so because she did it so skillfully. Women ought not to be idle, but follow Proba's example, Boccaccio argues, and search for wisdom instead of staying in their rooms, wasting their time on frivolous stories and gossip. He then goes on to admire her metaphorical 'weaving together' (*contextus*) of verses, but rejects women actually working with needle and distaff:

> Erat huic satis—si femineos consideremus mores—colus et acus atque textrina, si, more plurimum, torpere voluisset; sed quoniam sedula studiis sacris ab ingenio segniciei rubiginem absterxit omnem, in lumen eva-

89 Cazes 1998, 62–63, 142–143, 158–159, 340, 555, 644–645.

90 Robin 1997², 167–171; Brown 2011, 109–110.

> sit eternum. Quod utinam bono intuerentur animo voluptatibus obsequentes et ocio, quibus pregrande est cubiculo insidere, fabellis frivolis irreparabile tempus terere et a summo diei mane in noctem usque totam persepe sermones aut nocuos aut inanes blaterando deducere, seu sibi tantum lasciviendo vacare! Adverterent edepol quantum differentie sit inter famam laudandis operibus querere, et nomen una cum cadavere sepelire, et, tanquam non vixerint, e vita discedere.
>
> If we reflect on normal feminine practice, the distaff, the needle, and the loom would have been sufficient for Proba, had she wanted to lead an idle life like the majority of her sex. But she achieved eternal fame by taking her sacred studies seriously and scraping off completely the rust of intellectual sloth. Would that her example was favorably regarded by those women who yield to pleasure and idleness, who think it wonderful to stay in their rooms and waste irrevocable time in frivolous stories, who often drag out their hours from dawn to late at night in harmful or useless gossip and save time only for the pursuit of wantonness! Then they would see how much difference there is between seeking fame for praiseworthy works and burying one's name together with one's body—in effect, dying as if one had never lived.
>
> *Famous Women*, ed. and transl. BROWN 2001, 414–417

Here, as elsewhere in this book, Boccaccio argues that women who seek to be the equal to men must rise above their sex and leave their traditional needlework (and gossip) behind and instead pick up paper and pen. This question became a central issue in the debate about the nature of women and men that raged across Europe from the end of the fourteenth to the eighteenth century.[91] It became a forum for discussions on women and problems of chastity, power, speech, and knowledge. It was not easy for women to lay claim to power, education and the right to speak in public, since they risked to be accused of unchaste behavior. The intellectual noblewomen Isotta Nogarola (c. 1417–1466) provides us with an illustrative example. She belonged to the first generation of women that managed to acquire an education in classical and Christian literature and won recognition for her elaborate letters,[92] but as she reached her twenties, she had to withdraw from this sort of life after having been accused of promiscuity and incest with her brother in a pamphlet written under the

91 Cf. Amendola 2011, 133.

92 King and Rabil 2001, 14–19.

pseudonym “Pliny”, in which we read maxims such as: “an eloquent woman is never chaste”.[93] Because of such tendencies, arguments in favor of education for women tended to claim that it would only make them more virtuous; transform them into better wives and mothers. In this cultural milieu, the example of Proba proved to be very useful for feminists since she was always represented as an erudite, pious and virtuous woman, who loved her husband.

Another quality that made her work congenial was that it represents female writing and needlework at one and the same time. Both Boccaccio, as we have seen, and the French translation of his work from 1401 that inspired Christine de Pisan drew on this quality when describing the centonic art form in a metaphoric way, which brings out its affinities with the crafts of needle-work and patchwork-making:

> car adoncques la dicte femme moult desireuse d’acomplir sa pensee, mist la main a euvre, et maintenant par *Bucoliques* et puis par *Georgiques* ou par *Eneydos*, qui sont livres ainsi appellez que fist Virgile, ycelle femme couroit, c’est a dire, visitoit et lisoit, et maintenant d’une partie les vers tout entiers prenoit et maintenant de l’autre aucunes petites parties touchoit. Par merveilleux artefice et soubtiveté a son propos ordeneement vers entiers faisoit et les petites parties ensemble mettoit et coupploit et lyoit en regardant la loy, l’art et les mesures des piez et conjunctions des vers. Sans y faillir ordenoit tant magistraument que nul homme ne peust mieulx.
>
> Then the aforesaid woman, very eager to put her notion into effect, set her hand to the task. Now that woman ran through, which is to say, skimmed and read, the *Eclogues*, *Georgics*, and *Aeneid*, as are entitled the books Virgil composed, and now she would take from one part entire verses, now from another she would tap small pieces. With wondrous craftsmanship and subtlety she composed entire verses in good order. She put together small pieces and paired and joined them while respecting the rules, craft, and measures of the feet and the joining together of verses. Without making a slip she organized them with such great mastery that no man could have done better.
>
> *City of Ladies*, ed. RICHARDS and CARAFFI 2003, 156; transl. ZIOLKOWSKI and PUTNAM 2008, 146–147

93 Allen 2002, 958–960.

Pisan develops Boccaccio's homology between writing and needlework, but modifies his rejection of women devoting themselves to needlework rather than writing, adding that "no man could have done better".

The example of Proba had won authority and after Boccaccio and Pisan she was frequently invoked in treatises on women's equal value and right to education. First, in a letter written by Isotta Nogarola in 1436 or 1437 to her uncle Antonio Borromeo, whom she asked for money to buy a section of Livy's *From the Founding of the City*. To convince him of her need of education, she reminded him of the erudite Proba who "wrote a beautiful version of the New Testament". Along with Proba, she lists other wise women of the past; the Muses, Lasthenia of Mantinea, Axiothea of Philius, and Cornelia the mother of the Gracchi. These examples proved women's intellectual abilities and could be used to oppose misogynist conceptions. Nogarola declares that these women rightly ought to be admired since they surpassed all others in learning and goes on to tell her uncle that the sheer memory of them had given her courage to send him the letter. Consequently, the examples (including Proba) serve two functions. On the one hand they are models for Nogarola, who wished to follow in their footsteps; on the other, they are invoked as evidence to reject the misogynists' view that learning and women do not belong together.[94]

Some fifty years later, Proba served a similar purpose in two letters by the humanist Laura Cereta (c. 1469–1499). Her texts circulated among humanists as did those of Nogarola and a reccurent theme is the intellectual capacity of women.[95] The first letter in which she mentions Proba dates to 1485 and is addressed to the Dominican friar Lodovico de la Turre. Cereta encourages him to read a number of ancient female authors in order to overcome his prejudices about women and literacy. After the Sibylline books, she mentions the 'cunning' verses of Sappho and Proba Centona. In the same spirit as Isotta Nogarola, she claims not to have "woven together" (*retexui*) these examples in order to be compared to them (since she did not consider herself equal their ingeniousness), but because they had awakened her lust for knowledge, which had led to the rise of her "moral righteousness" and freed her from "sloth and purposelessness".[96]

Cereta returned to the example Proba in a letter from 1488, addressed to a character, probably fictional, entitled Bibolo Semproni. The main argument of the essay concerns women's natural right to learning. She begins the let-

94 In King and Robin 2004, 38–39.

95 Cf. Lerner 1993, 147–148; Ross 2009, 151–157; Amdendola 2011, 137.

96 In Robin 1997, 176–177.

ter by responding to her addressee, who had supposedly called her an exception among women because of her extraordinary intellect. Cereta answers him that she forms part of a long tradition of learned and noble women. Similarly to Christine de Pisan, she then goes on to describe this "republic of women", *respublica mulierum*, using several examples from Boccaccio's *Famous Women*, but omitting his negative remarks. Her only complaint is that a substantial number of women has chosen a life of vanity and dependence and have not spent their time studying and working hard in search for the good. Proba is introduced in the company of two Greek intellectuals: Sappho and the Epicurean philosopher Leontium. Like Boccaccio, Cereta writes that Proba composed her poem with fragments from both Virgil and Homer and, in addition to his account, she asserts that Proba was famous for both her writing and, surprisingly, for her oratory.[97]

Textile work is a recurrent theme in Cereta's letters but not with negative connotations. Instead, she systematically associates it with writing and thus undermines the traditional hierarchy. In a letter from 1486, she tells her friend Nazaria Olympica that the story of her life is the "simplest piece of weaving".[98] She applies the weaving metaphor on male subjects as well in a letter to the teacher of her brothers, Giovanni Olivieri, when assuring him that her brothers will "weave a garland of glory" to praise his excellent teaching.[99] Her most developed amalgamation of writing and needlework is found in a letter to her father's friend Sigismondo de Bucci, in which she describes a shawl that she is making, working on it during the night like Penelope.[100] This was the only time she had for *otium*, for intellectual and artistic activities, when she was not busy with labor: taking care of the family. The poet carefully describes the motives on the shawl where a number of savage animals, a leopard, a dragon, a lion, and an eagle, with fierce expressions are placed against a background of a dramatic and varied countryside setting. After the extraordinary ekphrasis, Cereta discusses Arachne, who rivaled Athena in a weaving contest and Pamphile of Kos, who was the first to spin cotton wool on a distaff according to the legend. She leaves the subject with an ironic remark stating that "these are the meaningless concerns of women". The letter is concluded with Cereta's declaration that she, as part of her quest for immortality, intends to publish a collection of epistles that she had composed during the nights. Diana Robin has called this ending

97 In Churchill et al. 2002, 93; cf. Robin 1997, 72–80, esp. 77; cf. also Ross 2009, 154–156.

98 Robin 1997, 23–29, esp. 24; Amendola 2011, 138.

99 Robin 1997, 53–55, esp. 54.

100 Amendola 2011, 139.

a homology where Cereta presents herself as "both thinker and spinner, both a historian and an artisan."[101] The figure of the woman writer and weaver/spinner was by now becoming commonplace in the feminist discourse. In a letter from 1436, the humanist Guarino Veronese (1370–1460) compared Isotta Nogarola and her sister to Penelope and Arachne after having read a number of their letters.[102] Although Proba was also a weaver as well as a scholar in the story of Boccaccio, his affirmation of the superiority of the pen to the needle retained its force. We see this, for instace, in a letter by Angelo Poliziano (1454–1494) to the writer and orator Cassandra Fedele (c. 1465–1558), whom he praised for having taken up books instead of the spindle, the pen instead of the needle, and the stylus instead of the distaff.[103]

This rivalry between the pen and the needle continues and flourishes among feminists in France in the sixteenth century. In a letter to a certain misogynist named Elenot, who had stated that the minds of women were "uncultivated and obscured" and that therefore they should occupy themselves only with spinning, Hélisenne de Crenne (Marguerite Briet, c. 1510–1552), writes that he must be ignorant of all the learned women throughout history, and goes on to list examples such as Proba and her *Cento*,[104] in the same style as Laura Cereta in her letter to Biblio Semproni.

Cereta's homology between writing and needlework lived on in Louise Labé's († 1566) third elegy of the *Debate Between Folly and Love*, where she fashions herself as a poet, skilled in myths, like Arachne, and daring like the heroic knight Bradamante in Ariosto's epic *The Frenzy of Orlando*:[105]

> Pour bien savoir avec l'esguille peindre
> J'eusse entrepris la renommee esteindre
> De celle là, qui plus docte que sage,
> Avec Pallas comparoit son ouvrage.

101 Robin 1997, 30–34, esp. 31.

102 King and Robin 2004, 41; see discussion in Amendola 2011, 137–141.

103 Ross 2009, 100.

104 De Crenne in ed. Beaulieu and Fournier 1995, 128–130. Proba goes under the name of Valeria in her letter, which may be related to the fact the Cornelius Agrippa—de Crenne's main source—mentions a certain Valeria in his *Declamation on the Nobility and Preeminence of the Female Sex* (1529) in the context where Proba is usually found: "Let us turn to oratory and poetry. Here we may cite Armesia, Androgynea, Hortensia, Lucretia, Valeria, Copiola, Sappho […]." He may have got the name from Vives, who calls her Proba Valeria. The *Declamation* is found in Rabil 1996, 82.

105 Baker and Finch 2006, 239, n. 30 and 32.

Qui m' ust vù lors en armes fiere aller,
Porter la lance et bois faire voler,

Wanting to paint fine scenes in my sewing frame, | I had challenged myself to extinguish the great fame | of her who—surely more studious than wise—| set her work against what Pallas had devised. | And you should have seen me in armor, riding high, | gripping my lance, letting my arrows fly!

Debate Between Folly and Love 3.33–38, transl. FINCH 2006, 166–167

This passage can be read as a critique of Ariosto, who praised Italian women poets such as Vittoria Colonna (c. 1490–1547) for leaving "the needle and the cloth" for the fountain of the Muses in The Frenzy of Orlando (37.14). We recognize this rhetoric from Angelo Poliziano's letter to Cassandra Fedele. But Labé's narrator declares that she wants to "paint fine scenes with her sewing frame" ("bien savoir avec l' esguille peindre") and in this way challenges Arachne, brave like Rinaldo's sister Bradamante, thus creating a synthesis between the art of weaving, of writing poetry and of epic heroism.

Cereta's and Labé's unwillingness to exchange the needle for the pen and wish to keep them both became a trend that culminated in Catherine des Roches' sonnet "To my distaff" (*A ma Quenoille*), published in Oeuvres in 1578:

Quenoille mon souci, je vous promets et jure
De vous aimer tousjours, et jamais ne changer
Vostre honneur domestic pour un bien estranger,
Qui erre inconstamment et fort peu de temps dure.

Vous ayant au costé je suis beaucoup plus seure
Que si encre et papier se venoient aranger
Tout à l' entour de moy, car pour me revanger
Vous pouver bien plustost repousser une injure.

Mais quenouille m' amie, il ne faut pas pourtant
Que pour vous estimer, et pour vous aimer tant
Je delaisse du tout cest' honneste coustume

D' escrire quelquefois, en escrivant ainsi,
J' escri de voz valeurs, quenoille mon souci,
Ayant dedans la main, le fuzeau, et la plume.

> Distaff, my care, I promise you and swear | That I'll love you forever, and never exchange | Your domestic honor for a good which is strange, | And which, inconstant, wanders aimlessly and does not endure. || With you at my side, I am far more secure | Than with ink and paper arrayed all around me, | For, if I needed defending, you would be there, | You are much better at repelling assault. || But distaff, my love, it is not really necessary, | That in order to value you and love you so, | I abandon entirely that honorable custom || Of writing sometimes, for by writing as I do, | I write of your worth, distaff, my care, | As I hold in my hand my spindle and my pen.
>
> To my distaff, ed. and transl. LARSEN 2006, 110–111

Des Roches promises her distaff eternal faithfulness, but explains that, although it makes her more self-confident than ink and paper, her love for it should not prevent her from writing. In this call for a female cultural autonomy, the distaff becomes a symbol for the security and protection of traditionalism and domestic duties, whereas the pen is a stranger with its flickering movement of the paper sheet, emblematic for its instability. But it is a good stranger (*un bien estranger*); a necessary weapon that must accompany the 'shield' that is the distaff. In this way, the conflict stated in the first two quatrains is solved when the poet declares her need for both spindle and the pen.

To conclude, a conceptual amalgamation of writing and weaving played an integral part in the rhetoric of the autonomy of early modern women writers. The example of Proba, through the narratives of Boccaccio and Christine de Pisan, fitted this scheme and became influential. She served not only as an *exemplum*, but her patchwork poem embodied the solution of the ever-lurking conflict between pen and needle.

Poeta Docta

Proba also had a number of male promoters during the Renaissance. One of them were Juan Luis Vives, who in his treatise *The Education of Christian Women* (1523) exhorts its recipient and dedicee, the queen of England Catherine of Aragon (1485–1536), to consult the *Cento* in the education of her daughter princess Mary I (1516–1558). In the fourth chapter of the first book, consisting of directions for the instruction of young girls, Vives included the *Virgiliocentones* of Proba and the *Homerocentron* of Eudocia, adding that they were widely diffused by the time.[106] Other examples of men encouraging women to read and

106 Vives in ed. Fantazzi 2000, 69.

study Proba are found in the editions of the *Cento* itself: Jacob Canter's edition from 1489 was dedicated to his sister as she entered the Birgittine order in Friesland,[107] and in 1553, a French translation of the *Cento* was dedicated to Marguerite of France.[108]

Boccaccio's examples from *Famous Women* were re-used and modified by a number of French authors.[109] Symphorien Champier's (c. 1472–1540) *The Ship of Virtuous Ladies* from 1503 imitates Boccaccio but excludes the negative remarks on the ability of women in general. His work was dedicated to the French princess and regent Anne of France (1461–1522) and in it we find Proba included in a section on female saints, presented as very learned and instructed in every art and science.[110] The Dominican Antoine Dufour shows influences from this work in *Lives of Famous Women* from 1504, dedicated to the French duchess and queen Anne of Brittany (1477–1514).[111] He claimed that Proba was one of the greatest authors in the world. She was such a great composer that Virgil and Homer where but her disciples:

> En ce temps régnoit l'une des plus grans poèthes et oratrixes du monde, nommé Proba, femme d'Adelphus, laquelle fist ung oeuvre que, si je ne l'avoye leu, je le tendroye comme impossible. Car elle fist ung livre là où accorda tout le viel et nouveau Testament en mettre, ne prenant riens seullement fors les parolles de Virgille. Elle l'intitula les centones de Virgille. Saint Ihérosme, au prologue de sa Bible, la loue en disant: "Nous avons veu l'oeuvre sollempnel de Virgiliocentones." Depuys, se voullant monstrer en la langue grecque, fist ung aultre grant et merveilleux livre en grec des sentences d'Omère, qui fut aussi par elle nommé Homerocentones, duquel Saint Ihérosme parle en ce mesme prologue. Somme, ceste femme fut si tresingénieuse qu'en lisant ses livres, vous direz qu'Omère, Virgille et aultres orateurs, ses prédécesseurs, ne sont que ses disciples.

107 Cf. Cazes 1998, 277.

108 Le Blanc (Paris 1553).

109 Brown 2011, 110–111.

110 Champier 1503, 41^{r}–42^{v}: "Les femmes illustres dont lon ne list riens de leur sanctification. De centone. Centone latine fut si tresdocte et enseignee en chescun art et science que ce ne fust saint hieroisme qui va au contraire ie la nomeroye divine. Mais affin que ie ne loye par aventure repuns ie louse bien appeller tresenseignee. Laquelle transfera plusieurs vers de virgille a lentesdement de nostre loy et iceulx concorda avec nostre theologie et lettre evangelique."

111 Brown 2011, 144.

> By that time reigned one of the greatest poets and orators in the world, by the name of Proba, wife of Adelphius, who created a work that I, had I not read it, would consider impossible. For she composed a book in which she joined the entire Old and New Testament in meter, taking nothing but the words of Virgil. She called it the centones of Virgil. Saint Jerome, in the prologue of his Bible, praises her saying: "We have seen the celebrated work of the Virgiliocentones." Thereafter, wanting to prove herself in the Greek language, she wrote another book in Greek out of sentences of Homer, which she also named Homerocentones, of which Jerome speaks in this same prologue. To conclude, this woman was so very clever that in reading these books, you would say that Homer, Virgil and other orators, her predecessors, are nothing but her disciples.
>
> *Lives of Famous Women*, ed. JEANNEAU 1970, 142

The idea that Proba had lived in a time when women were free intellectuals started to circulate. She featured in Galeazzo Flavio Capella's defence of women, *The Nobility and Excellence of Women* (1525), where the author declared that he was nostalgic of the Golden Age when men did not oppress women. In a chapter entitled "De La Dottrina", he listed ancient exempla of erudite women that would prove any misogynist wrong: Corinna of Thebes, Erynna, Cornificia, Hortensia, Sulpicia, Paula and Marcella, Plinius' Calpurnia, Crassus' Lelia and Proba among the Romans; Themistoclea, sister of Pythagoras, and Arete among the Greeks. Like his predecessors, he wrote that Proba had collected the verses of Virgil "with magnificent artfulness".[112] Not only Proba's erudition, but also her artistic capacity was admired in the sixteenth century when cento-compositions were in vogue.

Proba's function as a role model for intellectual women lived on for a few centuries thereafter, but was not as frequently invoked.[113] In recent years,

112 Capella 1526, 16–17.

113 Later examples of evocations of Proba in this context is found in the treatise of the political status of women by Gisbertus Voetius who in a catalogue of literary women in *Politica Ecclesiastica* (1663–1676) includes "Proba Falconia, a Roman whose Centones Virgiliani still exists, in which she cleverly describes deeds of the Old and New Testaments." In Irwin (1998) 126. She was also listed by Giuseppa Eleonora Barbapiccola (c. 1700–1740) among the ancient female poets that she believed should be included in the education of women. This list formed part of the preface to her Italian translation from 1722 of René Descartes' *Principles of Philosophy*. See Paula Findlen's transl. in Messbarger and Findlen 2005, 47–50.

however, she is more often presented as one of the most "notable women writers" of Latinity,[114] a *poeta docta*.[115]

Summary and Conclusions

The positive responses to Proba's *Cento* were most emphatic in the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries, but may be traced back far earlier. In the pre-Carolingian period, her poem was transmitted with the works of Venantius Fortunatus and with two poems by the Frankish saint and queen Radegund, both produced in monasteries that were founded by the Frankish queen Balthild. This seems to indicate the prominence of women in an early readerships. The manuscript tradition further suggests that the *Cento* was used in insular scholarly contexts. During the Carolingian period, the *Cento* was canonised along with other early Christian poems within the study of *Ars grammatica*. In this context, the Christian theme seems to have been more important than the connection to Virgil and it was used as a replacement rather than a complement to Virgil. It is not until the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries that we find it grouped with the Roman poet in the manuscripts as a paratext to the Virgilian works. This is also when the representation of Proba as a Sibyl and mouthpiece of Virgil the prophet gained ground. The pendulum swung back with Aldus Manutius edition from 1501, in which he declared that it would serve to replace the reading of pagan poets among young students and protect them from pagan myths while still teaching them classical Latin. It served as a schooltext in the centuries to come, but as the popularity of centowriting increased among European scholars, it became the object of creative reception as well. Henri Estienne's extensive study of the cento form in *Parodiae Morales* in 1575, in which he urged his readers to compose their own centos, probably played a significant part in this development: The editions of Proba's *Cento* published after this date were often edited by scholars who included their own centos as introductory pieces.

Proba's text also had an impact on early feminist discourse and in treatises on women's rights in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, in which she became a widely invoked *exemplum* and evidence of the long tradition of intellectual women. It proved to be very useful in the 'querelle des femmes' since she was

114 Snyder 1989, 136.

115 Harich-Schwarzbauer 2009, 336.

always represented as erudite, pious and virtuous. In this context, a narrative emerged in which Proba had been praised by her contemporaries, especially Jerome, and that she had lived in a Golden Age when women where treated as free intellectuals. The patchwork metaphor that characterizes the cento form also contributed to a reconciliation of the female tradition of needlework with writing, often presented as opposites in these contexts.

CHAPTER 4

The Confessions of Proba

The *Cento* may be divided into two narrative parts: episodes from the Old Testament (56–332) and from the New Testament (338–686). Before, in between and after these, we find proems, interludes and epilogues, and these extradiegetic parts will be the topic of this chapter. From a narratological point of view, these constitute the "extradiegetic" level of the text, in which the narrator comments on the narrative itself. A confessional and devotional theme pervades these sections, and we will examine the way in which the poet formulates a prayer in classicizing form, which has been called the first of its kind.[1]

Structure

The poem is introduced by a general proem (1–28) and then another prefatory section (29–55) introducing the narrative of the Old Testament. This first main part of the *Cento* ends with an epilogue (319–332), followed by a short introduction (333–345) to the New Testament. Together, these parts could also be regarded as a sort of interlude in the poem. After the baptism of Christ, there is an extradiegetic digression (415–428) where the narrator comes into focus again, and the poem as a whole ends with an epilogue (687–694).

We may further divide the individual extradiegetic moments into smaller sections.[2] The introductory proem consists of four parts alternating between poetic rejection and invocation: in verses 1–8, the narrator rejects the theme of war; verses 9–12 constitute a prayer for divine inspiration; in verses 13–19, the narrator (named Proba, or perhaps *vatis Proba* (p. 18)) again rejects traditional pagan symbols of poetic inspiration; in verses 20–28, the narrator turns to God once again, asking him to guide her mind.

The first 23 verses consist not exclusively of Virgilian quotations but form an independent composition, rich in allusions to Lucan, Virgil and Juvencus (see Appendix). On the grounds of this partial centonization, Hagith Sivan has

1 Green 1997, 557: "The frequency of such elaborate and classically oriented prayers in later Christian poets should not blind us to the fact that here is one of the earliest, perhaps indeed the first."

2 Cf. the divisions in Green 1997, 549 and Bažil 2009, 124–129.

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suggested that the first proem constitutes a later addition,[3] but the structural correspondences with the other extradiegetic sections in the *Cento* speak to the contrary and few scholars have been convinced.[4]

The Old Testament proem also begins with a divine invocation (29–34) followed by a presentation of *Genesis* (35–46) and ended with yet another rejection of the narrator's previous fascination with the theme of war (47–49). Her new ambitions are presented, (50–53) and the narratees are addressed, "mothers and men, boys and unmarried girls" (*matres atque viri* ¦ *pueri innuptaeque puellae*)—(55 ~ *G* 4.475/*A* 6.306 ¦ *G* 4.476).

Both Roger Green and Hagith Sivan have pointed to certain structural and thematic similarities between the two opening proems, although Green rightly disagrees with Sivan's claim that they are "largely identical".[5] Martin Bažil has further shown that the interlude also follows the same pattern:[6] first a rejection of the theme of murder and war in the epilogue to the Old Testament (319–332) and then a plea for divine inspiration in the introduction to the New Testament (333–345). These parallels serve to highlight the spiritual progression made throughout the poem: first the transition from pagan myths and war epic to the Old Testament, marked by the phrase "A greater order of things opens before me" (*maior rerum mihi nascitur ordo*, 45 ~ *A* 7.44), and then from the Old to the New Testament: "I set a greater work in motion" (*maius opus moveo*, 334 ~ *A* 7.45).

In the extradiegetic digression following the baptism of Christ (415–428), the narrator praises her own conversion to Christianity. In the epilogue (687–694), she turns to her audience—her *socii* and her "sweet husband"—and exhorts them to keep up the annual celebrations of the ascension of Christ.

Proba's 'Previous Works'

Proba begins her poem by confessing (*confiteor*, 8) that once, long ago, she wrote about despotic kings and cruel fighting: "doomed men caught by a vicious lust for power, | of numerous murders, of the cruel wars of kings" (*regnandi miseros tenuit quos dira cupido*, | *diversasque neces, regum crudelia bella*,

3 Sivan 1993, 147–150.

4 See the objections raised by Margoni-Kögler 2001, 124, n. 41; Margoni-Kögler 2001², 146–147, n. 34; Consolino 2006, 110, n. 225; Sineri 2011, 232–234.

5 Green 1997, 549.

6 Bažil 2009, 124–129.

2–3; cf. *G* 1.37). This passage is often interpreted biographically and read against a backdrop provided by the fourth-century historian Ammianus Marcellinus (16.6.2), according to whom Adelphius (the centonist's husband) was involved in the conflict between Emperor Constantius II (c. 317–361) and the usurper Magnentius († 353), which erupted in the battle of Mursa Major in 353.[7] It is generally believed that these first eight verses allude to this event:

> Iam dudum temerasse duces pia foedera pacis,
> regnandi miseros tenuit quos dira cupido, *G* 1.37
> diversasque neces, regum crudelia bella
> cognatasque acies, pollutos caede parentum
> insignis clipeos nulloque ex hoste tropaea, *G* 3.32
> sanguine conspersos tulerat quos fama triumphos,
> innumeris totiens viduatas civibus urbes, *A* 8.571
> confiteor, scripsi: satis est meminisse malorum:
>
> In days gone by, of leaders who transgressed sacred treaties of peace, | doomed men caught by a vicious lust for power, | of numerous murders, of the cruel wars of kings, | of kindred battle lines and gleaming shields | stained with patricial blood, of trophies taken from no enemy, | of bloody triumphs announced by their fame, | of cities so often deprived of countless citizens, | I confess, I wrote of these things. So much for recalling evils!
>
> *Cento* 1–8

This description of what appears to be a civil war set in the past has been taken as evidence that the *Cento* was written soon after the battle between Magnentius and Constantius (pp. 21–24, 47–48). The idea is that Proba condemns the war not only out of piety, but also because of her own personal interests: Her husband became Prefect of Rome under the reign of Magnentius and, according to Ammianus, he was accused of treason after the victory of Constantius.[8] Proba is therefore believed to have written an epic poem (now

7 Schenkl 1888, 513–514; Ermini 1909, 14–15; Moricca 1928, 852–855; Clark and Hatch 1981, 98; Salzman 1991, 229, n. 165; Matthews 1992, 291–299; Herzog and Schmidt 1993, 385–386; Sivan 1993, 146–147; Green 1997, 551–552; Disselkamp 1997, 142; Cazes 1998, 45, n. 4, 191, n. 5; Beaune and Lequain 2000, Salzman 2002, 163; 116; Harvey 2004, 382; Stevenson 2005, 66; Barnes 2006, 254–256; Green 2008, 268–269; Ziolkowski and Putnam 2008, 475; Cameron 2011, 334–336; Sandnes 2011, 142–143; Badini and Rizzi 2011, 50; Sineri 2011, 23–24.

8 Matthews 1992, 295–298; Green 1997, 551–552; Barnes 2006, 254–256; Green 2008, 268–269.

lost) on the war in order to play down the role of her husband in the preceding conflict.[9] It has once been suggested that Proba might not have actually written about this war,[10] but the general tendency among modern scholars has been to speculate about the nature of this lost work. This tradition started in a note by Bernard de Montfaucon, who reports that he found the following subscription in a tenth-century manuscript containing the *Cento* in a Benedictine abbey between Mantua and Modena:

> Proba uxor Adelphi, mater Olibrii, et Aliepii (sic pro Alypii,) cum Constantini (sic pro Constantii) imperatoris bellum adversus Magnentium conscripsisset, conscripsit et hunc librum.
>
> When Proba, wife of Adelphius, mother of Olybrius and Alypius, had written about the war of emperor Constantius against Magnentius, she also wrote this book.
>
> MONTFAUCON 1702, 36

In 1772, Girolamo Tiraboschi lamented the fact that this poem had gone lost whereas the *Cento* had been preserved, since he considered the latter a mere mix of somebody else's verses.[11] More recently, Alan Cameron has suggested that Proba's earlier work may have been one anticipating the panegyrics of Claudian in style and genre:

> Whether Proba was first converted after writing this epic or simply rejected the Olympian epic machinery as her piety deepened, it seems clear that she wrote a traditional classicizing epic on a recent imperial campaign, the war against Magnentius in the early 350s, almost half a century before Claudian.
>
> CAMERON 2004, 352

Cameron believes that the reason why this and other panegyrics from the period before Claudian did not survive was because they were "of such modest quality and ephemeral interest that they failed to survive".[12] Other scholars have even suggested that the poet herself may have arranged so that the work

9 Matthews 1992, 297–298.

10 Shanzer 1986, 232–233; after Matthews' (1992) objections Shanzer (1994, 86) modified her thesis. Cf. also Curran 2012, 329.

11 Tiraboschi 1782, 397; cf. Hoch 1997, 4–5.

12 Cameron 2004, 353.

would be forgotten.[13] I am convinced that the reason why such a work has not been transmitted is that Proba never wrote a poem on the war between Magnentius and Constantius,[14] but that the note reported by Montfaucon is the conjecture of a medieval scribe. This would not be the only instance at which these lines were considered to be in need of explanation: In a fifteenth century manuscript preserved in El Escorial we find a marginal note stating that the verses "cruel wars of kings, of kindred battle lines" (*regum crudelia bella* | *cognatasque acies*, 3–4) refer to Eteocles and Polynices, i.e. the violence of the mythological Theban War.[15] Although probably just as speculative as the suggestion in Montfaucon's manuscript (but note that *reges* seems to be more fitting for Theban princes than Magnentius or Constantius), it shows how interpretations of these verses could vary before the biographical reading was canonized.

Recusatio

One alternative interpretation could be that the epic poem is a fabrication pertaining to the poetic persona, introduced for the sake of the literary and rhetorical *recusatio*, where the poet turns against one kind of literary genre in favor of another.[16] A well-known example of *recusatio* is found at the beginning of Virgil's sixth *Eclogue*, where Tityrus says that Apollo drew him by the ear when he started to sing of "rulers and wars" (*reges et proelia*, 3) and ordered him to sing instead a song that would fit a shepherd, whereupon Tityrus obeys Apollo and agrees to stay with the "rustic muse". This passage is paralleled in Ovid's *Amores*, where the narrator declares that he meant to write a poem on

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13 Moricca 1928, 852–853; Ermini 1960, 196; Badini and Rizzi 2011, 50.

14 For a similar opinion see Sowers 2010, 17, n. 6: "The conversion of pagan poets to Christianity often accompanies a conversion of literary themes as well, from classical to Christian ones. This is a well-known and often-repeated topos in late antique literary traditions. […] Faltonia Proba, says in the opening lines of her cento that she originally wrote traditional poems, that is, those with secular topics, but has recently turned to the writing of sacred stories. Although such details are commonly taken as historically reliable, their frequency and predictability in the *vitae* of poets hardly reflects reality and more likely reveals the rhetoric of conversion used in the early centuries of Christianity."

15 El Escorial, Real Biblioteca de San Lorenzo, O.III.1, fol. 51v: *Bellum thebanum quod gestum est inter Etheoclem et Pollinicem fratres propter regnum qui singuli certamine concurrentes se mutuis vulneribus confoderunt*

16 Cf. Sineri 2011, 85.

war in heroic meter, but that Cupid stole a foot away, turning his poem into elegiac couplets. Proba's rejection seems to belong to this classical tradition.

A prominent intertext to Proba's *recusatio* is Lucan's *The Civil War* (65 AD), an unfinished epic treating Caesar's accomplishments, which became highly influential in late antique literary culture.[17] The work begins with the poet lamenting the war between Caesar and Pompey, and Proba imitates this introduction in style, structure and length. The individual expressions and quotations adapted from Lucan include the first part of the fourth verse in the *Cento*, "kindred battle lines", found in the exact same position in *The Civil War*.[18] But after the seventh verse, the frequency of allusions to Lucan decreases and the centonist declares that she will change the subject: "So much for recalling evils!". The poet does not seek to "increase [her] reputation through words" (*verbis extendere famam*, 18 ~ *A* 10.468), a negated allusion to the Virgilian gnomic verse: "to increase one's reputation by deeds; that is the task of virtue" (*famam extendere factis*, | *hoc virtutis opus*, *A* 10.468–469). Again, at the end of the introduction (47–53), she states that she will "confess" that she once devoted herself to epic works: "For, I will confess, I used to sing about spectacles of trivial things, | always about horses, arms of men and battles" (*namque—fatebor enim—*¦ *levium spectacula rerum* | *semper equos atque arma virum pugnasque canebam*, 47–48 ~ *E* 1.31 ¦ *G* 4.3 | *A* 9.777). Here, the "spectacles of trivial things", originally denoting the humble topic of beekeeping in the *Georgics* (4.3), is equated with the lofty subject of "arms and men" in an allusion not only to the famous opening-line of the *Aeneid*, but to be exact to the description of the Trojan poet Creteus when he is slain by Turnus: "His songs were always of horses, of arms, and of men and their battles" (*A* 9.777). The slightly ironic tone in the lines following the re-used verse from the *Georgics*, in which Virgil promises to describe the great society of the bees, "leaders great of heart, the societal order, customs, ambitions, peoples and battles" (4–5), might come to mind in connection to the the author's rejection of epics. In this way, the classical hierarchies of didactic and epic poetry are collapsed; "arms and men" is not the highest subject, but an ignoble one that should be rejected in order to make way for the new Christian epic. The poet confesses that she once evoked battles, horses and heroes, frivolous and trivial subjects, but now she sees them from a different poetological and religious position.

17 D'Angelo 1999, 390–392.

18 Cf. Fontanini 1723 (1708), 236–237; Green 1997, 550; Fassina 2004, 134–136; Bažil 2009, 121. On allusive introductions in late antique literature; cf. also Janson 1964, 155–156.

There is an inherent ambivalence in the *recusatio* as such, as the poet introduces and reminds the reader of other types of poems only to refute them. In Proba's *Cento*, this is highly significant since the epic tradition that she rejects constitutes the very building blocks of her *Cento*. It reflects a central tension in her poetics: using pagan poetry, yet at the same time refuting it. In the introduction, this is clearly expressed when the poet rejects traditional pagan symbols of poetic inspiration: she will not seek "ambrosian nectar" (*ambrosium nectar*, 13) or "lead the Muses down from the Aonian peak" (*Aonio de vertice ducere Musas*, 14 ~ *G* 3.11), not "follow tripods decked with laurel and empty vows" (*laurigerosque sequi tripodas et inania vota*, 16) or deal with "quarrelling gods of noble princes and defeated Penates" (*iurgantesque deos procerum victosque penates*, 17 ~ *A* 1.68), but instead she invokes the Judeo-Christian God and the Holy Spirit to inspire her.

There are also literal affinities with *loci classici* of this sort of rejection of Apollo and the Muses, such as the one found in Paulinus of Nola's letters to Ausonius:[19]

> Non ego Castalidas, vatum phantasmata, Musas
> nec surdum Aonia Phoebum de rupe ciebo;
> carminis incentor Christus mihi, munere Christi
> audeo peccator sanctum et caelestia fari.
>
> I will not call upon the Castalian Muses, the phantoms of poets, | nor upon deaf Apollo from the Aonian rock. | Christ is the one who sets the tune for my song, through the gift of Christ | I, a sinner, dare to speak the holy and heavenly.
>
> *Carmina* 15.30–33

Like Paulinus, a sinner who must reject the Muses in favor of Christ, the poet of the *Cento* also confessed (*confiteor*, 8; *fatebor*, 47) her previous sins of pagan poetics and assumed the new role of Christian author. As such, it was her task to "disclose lofty matters buried in earth and mist" (*pandere res altas terra et caligine mersas*, 51), a verse taken from an invocation of the gods of the netherworld by the poet of the *Aeneid* (6.267). This is perhaps how the culminating verse of the first invocation should be interpreted, where Proba asks God to inspire her and open up her heart:

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19 Cf. Cameron 2011, 329; Sineri 2011, 97. Cf. Also *Carmina* 10.19–32 with regard to Auson. *Epist.* 21.73–74; cf. Green 1997, 554.

> arcana ut possim vatis Proba cuncta referre
>
> in order that I, Proba, may disclose all mysteries of the poet/prophet.
>
> *Cento* 12

Many have opted for a different interpretation, taking *vatis* ('poet' or 'prophet') in the nominative case as an attribute to Proba: "in order that I, Proba the Prophet, may disclose all mysteries" (p. 18). In any case, the author of the *Cento* puts the double meaning of the word *vatis* to use and presents herself or her source as an entity with divinatory powers; but to release it, she will need the help of the Christian God, not the Muses of the pagans. The ambiguity of the verse could also function as a metapoetical hint that underlines the polyvalence in centonic poetry in general, similar to the double meaning at the beginning of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* pointed to by Steven Wheeler.[20]

Proba promises that she will not waste time glorifying the human deeds:

> nullus enim labor est verbis extendere famam *A* 10.468
> atque hominum studiis parvam disquirere laudem:
>
> For it is no concern of mine to increase my reputation through words | and through human endeavor seek a meager glory.
>
> *Cento* 18–19

The rare phrase "seek glory" (*disquirere laudem*) is found only here and in Juvencus' Bible epic, where Jesus speaks to the people of Jerusalem (cf. John 5:41–44):

> Non mihi captatur terrenae gloria laudis.
> Namque ego quod summi genitoris nomine veni,
> respuitur vobis, veniet sed decolor alter,
> nomine quem fultum proprio gens vestra sequetur.
> Alternae in vobis captatur gloria famae,
> unius et solam fugitis disquirere laudem.
>
> I do not seek the glory of earthly praise. | For, since I have come in the name of the supreme father, | you spit on me; but another paler man will come, | who relies on his own name, your race will follow him. | You seek

20 Wheeler 1999, 8–9.

the glory of praise from each other | but chose not to aim only for the praise of the One.

The Four Books of the Gospels 2.681–686

This similarity has been interpreted as an allusion through which Proba criticizes her predecessor, implicitly pointing out the contradiction between these words, spoken by Jesus, and Juvencus' own statement in his preface that he hopes to win eternal glory.[21] It is difficult to accept this reading for a number of reasons. First of all, in Juvencus, the words actually refer to the pursuit of God's praise as opposed to that of man. Secondly, in the prologue to the New Testament narrative, Proba proclaims that she does seek to extol her own name:

Nunc ad te et tua magna, pater, consulta revertor.	*A* 11.410
maius opus moveo: ¦ vatum praedicta priorum	*A* 7.45 ¦ 4.464
adgredior, ¦ quamvis angusti terminus aevi	*A* 3.38 ¦ *G* 4.206
accipiat, ¦ temptanda via est, qua me quoque possim	*A* 1.28 ¦ *G* 3.8
tollere humo ¦ et nomen fama tot ferre per annos	*G* 3.9 ¦ 3.47

Now, Father, I turn to you once again and to your great plans. | I set a greater work in motion; I move towards the prophesies of ancient | seers. Even if the end of a brief life | receives it, I must try the path along which I will be able to lift | myself above the ground and carry the name in fame for so many years.

Cento 333–337

Like Juvencus, she does not reject poetic fame as such, but only that which is bound to the earthly realm alone and associated with pagan epic poetry. Since the Old Testament with its violent wars and heroic episodes seems too close to this tradition, it must be rejected in yet another recusatio, in which the poet stops just a few verses into *Exodus*:

Quid memorem infandas caedes, quid facta tyranni	*A* 8.483
nesciaque humanis precibus mansuescere corda,	*G* 4.470
Aegyptum viresque Orientis et ultima ¦ bella	*A* 8.687 ¦ 8.675 etc.
magnanimosque duces totiusque ordine gentis,	*G*. 4.4
quo cursu deserta petiverit ¦ et tribus et gens	*E* 6.80 ¦ *A* 7.708
magna virum, ¦ meriti tanti non inmemor umquam,	*G* 2.174 ¦ *A* 9.256

21 Bažil 2009, 122–123.

quique sacerdotes casti ¦ altaria iuxta, *A* 6.661 ¦ 4.517
quique pii vates ¦ pro libertate ruebant, *A* 6.662 ¦ 8.648
qui bello exciti reges, quae ¦ litore rubro *A* 7.642 ¦ 8.686
conplerint campos acies, [...] *A* 7.643
cetera ¦ facta patrum ¦ pugnataque in ordine bella
G 3.3 etc. ¦ *A* 1.641 ¦ 8.629
praetereo atque aliis post me memoranda relinquo. *G* 4.148

Why should I recall infamous murders and the deeds of tyrants? | Hearts that knew not how to be softened by human prayers, | Egypt, the power of the East and wars in the outermost regions? | Greathearted commanders and the family-line of each people, | the path they made way through the desert, the tribe, the great people | of men (I am never forgetful of this great feat)? | The chaste priests beside their altars, | the pious prophets who perished for the sake of freedom, | the kings who were roused to war, what battle lines | filled the fields on the red beach. [...] The other deeds of the ancestors and their long series of battles, | I will pass over and leave for others to sing after me.

Cento 319–328/331–332

In tone and in its enumerative stucture, this epilogue forms a parallell to the poem's initial *recusatio* (1–8),[22] and some of the virgilian allusions reconnect to the last refutation of the introduction (47–49). The expression "greathearted commanders", *magnanimosque duces* (322) could represent the leaders of the Hebrew people, and derives from the 'society of bees' in the introduction to the fourth book of the *Georgics* (4.4). The hypotextual connection to the bravehearted bees seems to connect the stories about Hebrew leaders to the "spectacles of trivial things", hence rejecting the martial aspects of the Roman as well as Judaic literary tradition to give room for a new Christian genre. Four times (verses 321, 326, 327 and 331), phrases are plucked from Virgil's extravagant description of the shield of Aeneas, on which Vulcan depicted the origins of the Roman people. Moreover, in two instances (327 and 328), Proba uses the Virgilian invocation of the Muses of war at the beginning of the Catalogue of Italians (7.641–646).[23] These episodes represent important displays of Roman ideology in Virgil, but they also serve to mark the narrative transition in the middle of the *Aeneid* between the Odyssean and the Iliadic.

22 Cf. Sineri 2011, 203–204.
23 Cf. Bažil 2009, 128–129.

In a way, the first half of the *Cento* (mainly retelling *Genesis*) is conceptually analogous to the first six books of the *Aeneid*, with special focus on the hero's visit to Hades in the last of these. But at the same time, the point where Virgil turns to the part of his epic concerned with war and heroic deeds—presented as a more dignified topic: "I set a greater work in motion" (*maius opus moveo*, 334; *A* 7.45)—Proba rejects this dramaturgical paradigm and moves on to something essentially new: the New Testament, and it is not until this narrative begins that she utters her *maius opus moveo*.[24]

Disarming Virgil

After the first refutation mentioned above, the poet turns to "God Almighty" (*deus omnipotens*, 9), asking him to accept her "sacred song" (*carmen sacrum*, 9) and to "loosen the mouth of [his] eternal sevenfolded Spirit" (*aeternique tui septemplicis ora resolve*, 10 ~ *A* 12.925 | 3.457). This last concept of the spirit being "sevenfold" is consistent with the theological terminology in use at the time during which Proba wrote her *Cento*.[25] In the Book of Revelation, God has seven spirits (1:4, 3:1, 4:5, 5:6) and in Isaiah (11:2), the seven characteristics of the spirit are described:

> He is filled with the Spirit of the Lord, the spirit of wisdom and insight, the spirit of prudence and the Spirit of power, knowledge, and piety.

Commenting on this episode, Tertullian describes the Holy Spirit as "sevenfold" (*Against Marcion* 4.128).[26] Its theological meaning seems radically different from the signification of the word in the *Aeneid*, where it occurs at one single occasion; namely, when the poet describes the shield of Turnus, which is composed out of seven layers of oxhide (*A* 12.925).[27] The correspondence between shield and spirit may at first not be entirely clear, and one could argue that this verse is employed mainly for its "semantic aptness" rather than its "allusive weight".[28] But in the end, no Virgilian recycling in the *Cento* can escape interpretability (pp. 14–15). In this case, the allusion to the shield may

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24 Cf. Smolak 2004, 57.

25 Cf. Ermini 1909, 109; Nodes 1993, 23–24.

26 *In cuius tenebris septemplex spiritus unus*; cf. Parmentier 1999, 58–65.

27 Cf. Fassina 2004, 136–137.

28 See Schottenius 2010, 46; cf. McGill 2005, 28–29.

assume ironic force, invoking the very same theme of war that has just been rejected. But now the 'sevenfoldedness' has nothing to do with ancient armory but with Christian theology, thereby disarming the epic genre in order to write a new poem of devotion and peace through the Holy Ghost. We could compare this to Paul's advice to the Ephesians to "Put on the whole armour of God" (6:11), "take the shield of faith" (6:16) and "take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit" (6:17).

The last words of the same verse constitute a clearer allusion to the Virgilian text: *ora resolve* occurs twice in Virgil, and in both cases we are dealing with prophets: the prophetic sea deity Proteus (*G* 4.452) and the Cumaean Sibyl (*A* 3.457). In a figurative sense, the correspondence implies that God takes Apollo's place, not only as a source of poetic inspiration, but also of prophesy. The appeal for divine inspiration is later taken up again in a second invocation (20–22), where the narrator describes herself as "soaked in the Castalian source" and that she has "imitated the blessed":

> Castalio sed fonte madens imitata beatos
> quae sitiens hausi sanctae libamina lucis
> hinc canere incipiam. praesens, deus, ¦ erige mentem; *G* 1.5
>
> No, soaked in the Castalian source, as one who has imitated the blessed | and quenched her thirst with the drink offering of the sacred light, | here I will begin to sing. God, be present and keep my mind upright.
>
> *Cento* 20–22

Although the Castalian source, situated on Mount Parnassus and consecrated to Apollo and the Muses, would naturally be regarded as a pagan icon and symbol of inspiration, in the context of the *Cento* it has been interpreted as an allusion to the Christian baptism, and the "drink offering of the sacred light" as a reference to the Eucharist.[29] This interpretation was current already among medieval readers: in a ninth-century manuscript we read *de baptisterio* in the margin.[30] Such an explanation could indeed be contested: To what extent is the poet really referring to her own baptism here? An important intertext seems to be the concluding words of Juvencus' prologue:

29 Clark and Hatch 1981, 126, 189, n. 9; Schnapp 1992, 109; Margoni-Kögler 2001, 127; Sineri 2011, 102–103.

30 Reg. lat. 251, 15^{v}, see Wilmart 1945, 1–6, esp. 1–3; Pellegrin 1978, 55–57; Buonocore 1992, 122–123.

> Ergo age sanctificus adsit mihi carminis auctor
> Spiritus, et puro mentem riget amne canentis
> Dulcis Iordanis, ut Christo digna loquamur.
>
> Come then, may the sanctifying Spirit be present, the author of my song, | and may the sweet Jordan with its pure stream nourish me as I sing, | so that I may speak things that are worthy of Christ.
>
> *The Four Books of the Gospels*, preface 24–27, transl. SHORROCK 2011, 22

In these verses, Juvencus alludes to the baptism of Christ since he mentions the river Jordan and thus creates a bridge between the pagan tradition of connecting poetic inspiration with rivers and the language and religious symbolism of baptism.[31] But whereas Juvencus asks to be inspired by Jordan—a river strongly connected to the biblical tradition—Proba "confesses" that she is "soaked" with water from the characteristically pagan Castalian source. It has rightly been objected that the oracular function of this fount seems incompatible with the Christian rite of baptism.[32] Yet, the dialogue between pagan and Christian imagery established by Proba often has a contrastive function; the Castalian source is introduced precisely for its prophetic connotations, but the source of inspiration will not be Apollo, but God and the Holy Spirit.

The same scene also has a metapoetic function, since the Castalian source, in which the poet is "soaked" when imitating the blessed (i.e. the evangelists), represents the Virgilian texts. Directly after this verse, the poet states that "here I will begin to sing" (*hinc canere incipiam*, 22), and the non-centonic composition comes to an end. One could argue that there are poetic reasons why Proba uses her own verses to regret her previous mistakes, and then gradually turns to Virgilian verses for the poem itself. Cazes believes that the poet abandons her own individual mode of expression in order to illustrate religious submission and humility.[33] In this way, the restrictions inherent to the cento form are ingenuously integrated with the poetic agenda.[34] The act of quoting reflects the way in which the poet, like ancient oracles, Sibyls or prophets, becomes a possessed channel for the language of somebody else. Verse 23 marks the shift: "I will declare that Virgil sang about the pious feats of Christ", and after this point, all verses contain Virgilian quotations, but the invocation keeps going:

31 Green 2006, 21–22; Shorrock 2011, 22–24.

32 Sandnes 2011, 151.

33 Cazes 1998, 46.

34 Cazes 1998, 264.

si qua fides animo, si vera ¦ infusa per artus *A* 3.434 ¦ 6.726
mens agitat molem et toto se corpore miscet *A* 6.727
spiritus et ¦ quantum non noxia corpora tardant *A* 6.726 ¦ 6. 731
terrenique hebetant artus moribundaque membra. *A* 6.732

if there is any faith in my soul, if a true mind flows through my limbs, | enlivens my form, and if the spirit mingles completely with my body | as far as it is not checked by unfavorable bodies | or blunted by the earthly joints and mortal limbs.

Cento 25–28

The greater part of these verses derive from the cosmological speech of Anchises, where the "mind" and "spirit" represent elements in the world soul; the one single mind that flows through all living creatures and breathes life into them.[35] Similarly, the narrator prays that divine inspiration shall flow through her limbs and guide her work. Thereby, the poet transfers Anchises' personification of the body of the universe to her own body;[36] she becomes a "micro-cosmos" mirroring a "macro-cosmos".[37]

It has also been suggested that these verses metaphorically represent the works of Virgil as dead matter that lacks an "invigorating element" ("élément vivifiant"), and that Proba sets out to give it life.[38] In the same spirit, Stephen Hinds argues that "Proba hopes not just that *her own flawed earthly limbs* but that *the flawed earthly 'membra' of Virgil's hexameters* can worthily proclaim the word of God [...] The subtext adds a note of quiet anxiety to the confident statement of Virgil's Christian authority".[39] This interpretation is reminiscent of the uneasiness expressed by the hypotextual identification of Virgil with the rich young man (pp. 174–75). On the other hand, it seems incompatible with the parallelism established by Proba between the world soul of the pagan philosophers and the Christian God, which strengthens the recognition of Virgil's prophetical understanding of the workings of the divine mind.[40]

35 Cf. *De verbi incarnatione* 15–16 (Schenkl 1888, 616) where it describes the creation of Christ; cf. also Prudentius, *Hamartigenia* 635–636 (Lavarenne 1945, 63) and *Cathemerinon* 3.186 (Lavarenne 1943, 18); cf. Courcelle 1984, 477, n. 199. For a similar use, cf. Courcelle 1984, 476–477.

36 Cacioli 1969, 199–200; Green 1997, 557; Sineri 2011, 106.

37 Clark and Hatch 1981, 141; Bažil 2009, 120.

38 Bažil 2009, 121.

39 Hinds 2014, 188.

40 Cf. Cullhed 2006, 621–622.

There are also other instances where the *Cento* points to parallels between Anchises' cosmological speech and the new Christian setting. His explanation of the celestial nature of the force in the seeds of living creatures (*A* 6.730–731) is used to accentuate Christ's relationship with the father: "the supreme Father's vigor and the celestial source" (*patris summi ¦ vigor et caelestis origo*, 32 ~ *A* 1.665 ¦ 6.730). This appropriation has affinities with Lactantius' exegesis, since he quotes the very same verses in his attempt to prove that the pagans were monotheists as well, and that although Virgil was perhaps not aware of "the truth itself" (*veritas ipsa*), at least he knew of something that "resembled the truth" (*similitudo veritatis*).[41]

It is difficult to judge whether Proba and her programmatic description of her work in verse 23 expresses a radical conviction that the Christian truth was already present on a deeper level in Virgil's works, delivered through centonization,[42] or the slightly more conventional position that several isolated passages in Virgil can be interpreted allegorically as referring to Christ and that these will be highlighted in the *Cento*. There are certainly examples of such cases: In verse 34, Proba programmatically recycles the famous verse of the fourth *Eclogue*: "Now, a new descendant is sent from the high heaven" (*Iam nova progenies caelo demittitur alto*, *E* 4.7).[43] She adds that "every age believed" (*omnis credidit aetas*, 34) in this new descendant, using a verse from the description of Aeneas' shield on which Vulcan depicts the invention of fire "on which all generations have trusted" (*omnis quem credidit aetas*, *A* 7.680). Thus, ancient messianic expressions are taken as evidence that it was indeed possible to be a *Christianus sine Christo* (pp. 56–63), possibly suggesting that the true God was as natural for all generations of human beings as is fire.

This act of engaging with pre-Christian predictions of the new religion becomes particularly clear in the proem to the Old Testament narrative:

nam memini ¦ veterum volvens monumenta virorum   *A* 8.157 ¦ 3.102

41 Cf. *Divinae Institutiones* 1.5.11. Cf. Schott 2008, 81–84, esp. 83.

42 See Mcgill 2007, 176: "what Proba actually writes in her programmatic statement makes it seem that her intercession will bring out the Christian in Virgil, rather than impose Chistian material on him. […] Presumably Proba's idea is that the Christian content lay latently in the semiotic depths of Virgil's lines, and that the centonist simply releases that content."

43 This verse is also recycled in the centos *De verbi incarnatione* 60 (Schenkl 1888, 618) and *De Ecclesia* 21 (Schenkl 1888, 622); cf. Ermini 1909, 111. For the reception of the fourth Eclogue, cf. Courcelle 1957; Ziolkowski and Putnam 2008, 487–503.

Musaeum ante omnes ¦ vestrum cecinisse ¦ per orbem
A 6.667 ¦ *E* 10.70 ¦ 8.9 etc.
quae sint, quae fuerint, quae mox ventura trahantur. *G* 4.393

For when I think of the work of our ancestors, I remember | above all your Musaeus, who sang throughout the world | of things that were, that had been, that were soon to be

Cento 35–37

The expression "above all your Musaeus" is excerpted from the sixth book of the *Aeneid*, where the Sibyl addresses a crowd in the underworld, "above all Musaeus" when seeking the spirit of Anchises. In a number of medieval manuscripts, it is noted that this refers to the Old Testament prophets and Moses,[44] and in several copies, the name of the Greek bard is changed into "Moses" (*Moseum, Moyseum, Moysen* etc.).[45] There are no other examples in the *Cento* where Proba modifies proper names in this way, and this is most likely the result of scribal corruption. Proba may very well have used the name Musaeus for the Judeo-Christian prophet, since it was often believed from the Hellenistic era onwards that Mousaios was the Greek name for Moses, and that Orpheus studied under him in Egypt.[46] This view was popular with early Christians, found among others in Eusebius (*Preparation for the Gospel* 9.27.3). By alluding to this tradition, Proba lends authority to the new religion by uniting the Judeo-Christian with the Greco-Roman.[47] The 'newness' of Christianity was a problem that Christian apologists had to face, and they did so in various ways.[48] Proba seems to opt for an argument according to which pre-Christian predictions of Christ prove that the religion is not new at all, but very old:

44 E.g. Pal. lat. 1753, f. 62ᵛ; Reg. lat. 251; Voss. Lat. Q 2:3, f. 26 ʳ.

45 Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Aug 17: *Moseum*; Zürich, Zentralbibliothek, C 68: *Moseum*; Pal. Lat 1753: *Moyseum*; Par. lat. 13048: *Moyseum*; Reg. lat. 251: *Mosaeum*; Oxford, St John's College, 98: *Moysen*; Vicenza, Biblioteca Civica Bertoliana, 507: *Moyseum*; Laur. plut. 23.15: *Museum*; Reg. lat. 585: *Museum*; Ottob. lat. 560: *Moysen*: Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale, F. IV.7: *Moysen*; Cambrige, St John's college, D 22: *Moyseum*; Cambridge, Trinity College Library, O.7.7.: *Moyseum*; Görlitz, Bistumsarchiv, Jauernick, Pfarrbibliothek, nr. 2: *Moysen*; Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 526: *Moysen*.

46 Feldman 1993, 241–242.

47 Cf. Kartschoke 1975, 61–62; Buchheit 1988, 169–173; Bažil 2009, 126; Sineri 2009; Sineri 2011, 112–114.

48 Droge 1989, 1–11; Rappe 2001, 413–416.

¦ maior rerum mihi nascitur ordo, *A* 7.44
si qua fidem tanto est operi latura vetustas *A* 10.792

A greater order of things opens before me | if old age will provide any faithfulness to so great a work.

Cento 45–46

The word *vetustas* refers to the "antiquity" of Proba's material, i.e. of *Genesis* and also of Virgil's poems.[49] In this metapoetic comment, the poet expresses that the great age of Virgil's work lends authority and credibility to her work. Proba "thinks of the work of our ancestors" (*veterum volvens monumenta virorum*, 35), just like Anchises when he is about to interpret an oracle (*A* 3.102). But the verb *volvens* can also bee taken as a reference to reading (a scroll),[50] and so, this may be read metapoetically in the *Cento*: The narrator, Proba, searches for her ancestors in memory (in Virgil's epic) and recalls Musaeus, who in one and the same person represents the Judeo-Christian and the Greco-Roman past. This is a typical manifestation of the *Cento*'s fundamental principle that traces of the new religion are present in the Roman literary heritage.

The Prophetic Confessor

In this last section, we will explore the way in which Proba's exegetical inventiveness and careful re-use of the Virgilian material is put to work in constructing her poetic and narrative persona. For this purpose, we will look at examples from the main diegesis as well as the extradiegetic parts of the poem.

It has been argued that Anchises' cosmological speech plays a key-role in Proba's Creation story.[51] It is emblematic that the first two verses of the Creation correspond to Anchises' cosmological speech in the *Aeneid*:

Principio caelum ac terras camposque liquentes *A* 6.724
lucentemque globum lunae ¦ solisque labores *A* 6.725 ¦ 1.742
ipse pater statuit *G* 1.353

49 Cf. Green 1997, 558.

50 Horsfall 2006, 110.

51 Schnapp 1992, 113: "[…] Proba establishes a precise parallelism—at once poetic and theological, narratological and thematic—between the Virgilian account of the World Soul and the Hebrew creation story."

In the beginning, heaven, earth and the watery fields, | the shining orb of the moon and the labors of the sun | were established by the Father himself.

Cento 56–58

The speech is also re-used in the condensed account of the Creation found in the introduction when Musaeus/Moses is presented:[52]

felix, qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas	*G* 2.490
unde hominum pecudumque genus vitaeque volantum	*A* 6.728
et quae marmoreo fert monstra sub aequore pontus	*A* 6.729

Happy he who was able to understand the causes of things, | whence originates mankind, the animal race, the lives of birds, | and the monsters that move beneath the marbled surface

Cento 39–41

Moreover, Anchises' account of the world soul infusing matter is used to illustrate the process of poetic inspiration (*Cento* 25–28 ~ *A* 6.726–727 and 731–732; (pp. 126–29)), focusing on the idea of the body naturally weakening and numbing the spirit. The same concept reappears when Adam and Eve eat the forbidden fruit, and—like Anchises' souls when bound by matter—"shunned the sight of light and air" (*Cento* 218–219 ~ *A* 6.733–734). The voice of Aeneas' father later reappears in key-episodes: the nature of Christ is twice described as a "vigor and the celestial source" (*vigor et caelestis origo*, *Cento* 32 and 382 ~ *A* 6.730) and the phrase "the cycle of time was completed" (*perfecto temporis orbe*), referring to when the time comes for souls to be reincarnated (*A* 6.745), is used to describe Christ's coming of age (*Cento* 380). Most notably, in a digression after the baptism of Christ, Proba describes her own conversion by re-using the description of how the soul is cleansed in Hades, "leaving the ethereal intelligence pure", before reincarnation:

concretam exemit labem purumque reliquit	*A* 6.746
aetherium sensum	*A* 6.747

and set me free from the clotted stain, left the ethereal intelligence | pure.

Cento 420–421

52 Cf. Sineri 2011, 116–117.

Through these repeated appropriations of the voice of Anchises' ghost, Proba endows her poetic persona with prophetic power as well as authority. But she also makes recurrent use of other embedded narrators in the Virgilian poems, accumulating attributes from a range of different representations. An important character in this context is the Sibyl of Cumae. Her admiration for Musaeus is equated with the poet's admiration for Moses (*Cento* 36 ~ *A* 6.667), and her knowledge of the cosmos is re-used to describe an early stage of creation (*Cento* 62–63 ~ *A* 6.578–579). The Sibyl's description of Aeneas' filial love for his father as an "image of great piety" (*tantae pietatis imago*) is refashioned into a description of how man was created in the image of the Father (*Cento* 118 ~ *A* 6.405), and her portrayal of the golden bough is converted into the forbidden fruit on the tree of knowledge (*Cento* 151 ~ *A* 6.141).

Proba's use of the Sibyl forms part of a greater enterprise to identify the fictive narrator with the figure of the prophets from pagan antiquity: like the Pythia in Delphi, she bathes in the Castalian spring before delivering her poem (*Cento* 20). In order to authorize herself as a woman poet, she especially connects herself with the Sibyl of Cumae who was believed to have predicted the birth of Christ.[53] Proba places her work in this tradition by reusing the phrase *nova progenies* from Virgil's fourth *Eclogue*, when she refers to Christ in her introduction (*Cento* 34 ~ *E* 4.7). In this way, she draws on the authority of the Sibyl as represented by Virgil and on her status among contemporary Christians, but the relationship is reciprocal: she also lends authority to the Sibyl by putting her words in the mouths of certain embedded narrators in the *Cento*. God chases Adam and Eve from Eden with the same words uttered by the Sibyl when chasing away Aeneas' companions (*Cento* 213–214 ~ *A* 6.258–259). Three verses in God's speech after the Fall derive from the interaction between the Sibyl and Aeneas (*Cento* 227–229 ~ *A* 6.669; 6.259; 6.128), and six lines in the Sermon on the Mount come from her description of Tartarus (*Cento* 469 and 475–479 ~ *A* 6.620; 610; 611; 608; 609; 614; 611). Thus, the poet alternates between Christianizing and bestowing religious authority upon the Cumaean Sibyl in the main narrative, and drawing upon her status in the extradiegetic sections as a pre-Christian prophet and an authoritative female wordsmith from the pagan world.

A third component of Proba's persona is formed from the representation of the satyr Silenus as an inspired prophet who sings about the origins of the universe in the sixth *Eclogue*. Like Anchises and the Cumaean Sibyl, Silenus' voice is present already in the condensed account of the Creation found in

53 See Schnapp 1992, 120.

the introduction when Musaeus/Moses is presented (*Cento* 38 and 42A ~ *E* 6.34 and 6.33). His song returns in the creation proper when land is separated from the sea (84–85 ~ *E* 6.35–36) and in the epilogue to the Old Testament, where Proba breaks off this part of the narrative with an *aposiopesis* similar to that of Silenus (*Cento* 323 ~ *E* 6.80). By framing her account of *Genesis* with phrases from Silenus' song, Proba draws on the prophetic status of this semi-divine figure, as the mythological teacher of Dionysus. Finally, then, Proteus, whose ability to speak of "what was, what is, and all that is to come" is ascribed to Musaeus/Moses in the introduction to the *Cento* (*quae sint, quae fuerint, quae mox ventura trahantur*, 37 ~ *G* 4.393). The sea creatures he cares for appear when the seas are separated from land in the Creation (*Cento* 88 and 90 ~ *G* 4.430–431), but more importantly, his story about Orpheus and Eurydice is re-used in the account of Adam and Eve. Adam blames Eve and calls her a "girl doomed to die" (*moritura puella*, 239 ~ *G* 4.458), the same words Proteus uses to describe Eurydice before the snake bites her. Proba thus establishes an analogy between Eve/Satan and Eurydice/the snake that sent her to Hades, and between Proteus and 'Proba' the narrator, who "knows what was, what is, and all that is to come", as ancient seers before her. The reoccurring re-use of words spoken by prophets that form the voice of the narrator—Anchises, the Sibyl of Cumae, Silenus and Proteus—creates a textual pattern that aligns the poetic persona with these legendary seers.

Finally, in the last verse of the introduction, the poet turns to the narratees and asks them to be silent and pay attention:

> ore favete omnes ¦ laetasque advertite mentes, *A* 5.71 ¦ 304
> matres atque viri ¦ pueri innuptaeque puellae.
> *G* 4.475 ¦ *A* 6.306 ¦ *G* 4.476
>
> Keep silent, everyone, and give me your cheerful attention | mothers and men, boys and unmarried girls.
> *Cento* 54–55

In Virgil, this audience refers to the dead spirits flocking around Orpheus in Hades when he plays his lyre in order to persuade the gods to bring Eurydice back to life (*G* 4.475–476). This allusion to the most legendary of poets brings the introduction to its crescendo, and establishes a parallel between the poetic persona and the famous student of Musaeus/Moses. In the epilogue of the poem (692), she similarly adopts the voice of Helenus, the Trojan seer who predicts that Aeneas and his men will reach their new homeland (*A* 3.408). She does so when addressing her audience, her "companions" (*socii*, 692), asking

them to "honor this sacred custom" (i. e. the celebration of the ascension of Christ) so that their descendants may stay in the religion. This re-use does not only serve to create an analogy between traditional Roman sacrificial rites and the new Christian feast, but also invokes the prophetic authority of the Trojan hero. The final verse of the whole *Cento*, "our descendants will also remain chaste in this sacred worship" (*hac casti maneant in religione nepotes*, 694 ~ *A* 3.409), derives from the episode where Helenus exhorts Aeneas to make it so that his descendants shall remain religiously pure, i.e. not only Aeneas' grandchildren but all future Roman generations. In a transferred sense, the narrator expresses a wish for future generations—not necessarily her own grandchildren—to stay within Christianity. Proba also turns to one specific narratee, her "sweet husband" (*dulcis coniunx*, 693), reusing the words spoken by the spirit of Creousa to Aeneas as he is fleeing Troy (*A* 2.777). This use of the famous ghost as the narrator and the dead souls from Hades as the narratees places the poem—on the hypotextual level—in a spiritual, eternal realm; and also in the classical tradition of writing for eternity.

But as we move through the extradiegetic passages, this grandiose, prophetic narrator is contrasted with a more intimate and personal form of address, that of a confessing believer. The reader is encouraged to associate the historic person Proba with the narrator of the poem, who repeatedly confesses her personal faith and longing for salvation. After the baptism of Christ, the *Cento* breaks out in a prayer-like digression. The narrator apologizes for comparing the small subject of her own salvation with this greater event and then turns to God:

Heu pietas, heu prisca fides! ¦ quas dicere grates	*A* 6.878 ¦ 11.508
incipiam, ¦ si parva licet componere magnis?	*A* 2.13 ¦ *G* 4.176
nec mihi iam patriam antiquam spes ulla videndi	*A* 2.137
nec spes libertatis erat nec cura ¦ salutis.	*E* 1.32 ¦ *A* 2.387
hic mihi responsum primus dedit ille petenti,	*E* 1.44
concretam exemit labem purumque reliquit	*A* 6.746
aetherium sensum ¦ meque in mea regna remisit.	*A* 6.747 ¦ 2.543
illum ego per flammas, ¦ agerem si Syrtibus exul,	*A* 6.110 ¦ 5.51
per varios casus, per ¦ mille sequentia tela,	*A* 1.204 ¦ 6.110
quo res cumque cadent, unum ¦ pro nomine tanto	*A* 2.709 ¦ 8.472
exsequerer strueremque suis altaria donis.	*A* 5.54
huius in adventum ¦ tantarum in munera laudum	*A* 6.798 ¦ 8.273
ipsi laetitia voces ad sidera iactant	*E* 5.62
intonsi montes: ¦ respondent omnia valles.	*E* 5.63 ¦ 10.8

> Oh piety! Oh ancient faith! What thanks | shall I begin to say, if I may compare small things with great? | Then I had neither any hope of seeing my ancient fatherland | nor hope of freedom nor care for salvation. | Here first he answered my prayers | and set me free from the clotted stain, left the ethereal intelligence | pure and sent me back to my kingdom. | Him alone I would follow through the fire, if I were exiled to the Quicksands, | I would face many sufferings and showers of a thousand arrows. | Whatever happens, I would follow him alone for the sake | of the mighty name, build altars and fill them with offerings to him; | at his advent, as a reward for his great glory,| the wooded mountains raise their voices in joy to the stars, | and the valleys answer to everything.
>
> *Cento* 415–428

In this interlude, the narrator turns from the narratees to God and appoints them to be witnesses of her confession. Herzog has pointed to this scene as one of the earliest examples of a poet expressing a 'self' in the Christian Latin literary tradition.[54] This technique of using the authorial persona in order to provide a feeling of authenticity to the text became important for Christian poets during late antiquity, as the old symbols of divine inspiration had lost their substance. Yet, important components of classical inspirational myths appear in an allusive pattern of this passage: "nor hope of freedom nor care [...] Here first he answered my prayers" (*nec spes libertatis erat nec cura* [...] *hic mihi responsum primus dedit ille petenti*, 418–419 ~ *E* 1.32 and 44). In the *Cento*, these verses mark the narrative persona's transition from dispair to liberation after her divine call. They derive from a noteworthy passage in the dialogue between Tityrus and Meliboeus in the first *Eclogue*. Here, the unnamed "God", clearly Augustus, has come to the aid of Tityrus, Virgil. Hence, a parallelism is constructed between the Roman poet's blessing by his imperial patron, and Proba's salvation as a Christian poet. Moreover, the Virgilian verse alludes in turn to Hesiod's famous vocation at the beginning of the *Theogony*: "And this speech the goddesses spoke first of all to me" (τόνδε δέ με πρώτιστα θεαὶ πρὸς μῦθον ἔειπον, 24),[55] lending futher intertextual depth to the line (God–Augustus–Muses and Proba–Tityrus/Virgil–Hesiod). Tityrus's voice is also present elsewhere in the *Cento*. For instance, Proba begins her confessesion that she used to sing of trivial things with a hemistich from Tityrus: "For, I will confess", (*namque—fatebor enim*, 47 ~ *E* 1.31). In Tityrus'

54 Herzog 1975, 46–51, esp. 47.

55 Clausen 1994, 49–50.

speech, this refers to the transition from Galatea to Amaryllis, before which point he "had no hope for salvation". Similarily, Proba was bound by earthly desires until she received the liberating call.

Through these hypertextual and intertextual patterns the poet engages classical inspirational myths and rare autobiographical moments in the Virgilian hypotext when constructing her confession. The space and prominent role allotted to these sections can be related to the emergence of personal consolation poetry in Early Christian literature, in which autobiography was an important element.[56] In these poems, as in Proba's, the distance between the biographical person and the poetic persona decreased as the author herself became the only guarantor for the truth and authenticity of the text, factors that were, moreover, all-important in Bible epic.[57] Homer's name never occurs in the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*, neither does Virgil's in the *Aeneid*, but among the early Christian Latin poets, such as Juvencus and Sedulius, this generic convention was seldom accepted.[58]

Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter we have explored the extradiegetic level of the text, i.e. the prefaces, interludes and epilogues to the narrative of the Old Testament (56–332) and the New (338–686). Numerous passages of the preface encapsulate the poetics of the *Cento* where transformation, ambiguity, and allegorical reinterpretation of the hypotexts (the Virgilian and biblical texts) are central elements. The narrator alternates between divine invocations and rejections of the epic theme of war. Her confessions (*confiteor*, 8; *fatebor*, 47) that she once wrote about battles have often been interpreted as references to important events in Proba's life, but here we have focused on their function as a *recusatio*, embodying an important tension in the poetics of the *Cento*: using pagan poetry but simultaneously refuting it. Not only are they metapoetic statements but they also assume a religious meaning within the new Christian setting as parts of the narrator's confession. Proba inserts her own name in the preface, includes a personal prayer for salvation and a greeting to her "companions" and "sweet husband" in the epilogue. These components are usually regarded as evidence that Proba composed her poem to her husband and children, rather than seen

56 White 2000, 18.

57 Witke 1971, 200–202.

58 Curtius 1990 (1953), 515.

in the light of the emerging Christian Latin poetic tradition, where the authorial persona was often fashioned in a way as to create a feeling of authenticity.

In these extradiegetic sections, which have invited the kind of biographical readings that we studied in chapter 1, the authorial persona is constructed in an artful piecing together of Virgilian language and Christian concepts. They provide us with a configuration that might serve as a hermeneutic key to the text: Virgil is modeled as an oracular source, and the narrator as a prophet and a confessing believer. In the following sections, we will see how these principles structure the narration and hypertextuality of the *Cento*.

CHAPTER 5

Centonizing Genesis

Readers might expect to find in the *Cento* of Proba a largely unstructured collection of quotations, barely coherent and following the biblical story only cursorily. This would supposedly be achieved *despite* the severe restrictions of the cento form. As Filippo Ermini put it at the beginning of the twentieth century:

> The cento appears like a chain of gold, of Virgilian gold, in which rings, small or large, shiny or rusty, are poorly fastened to one another. The polished and lucid rings arouse admiration; the shrill and rusty ring rips out reproach.[1]

Whereas individual expressions and Virgilian re-uses may be more or less successful, Ermini warns us not to expect too much from the overall structure of the poem. Similar metaphors are not uncommon in the critical discourse on late antique poetry. Henri-Irénée Marrou famously equated late antique readings of Virgil with the act of admiring a string of pearls "held between the fingers, examining each grain one after the other for its particular beauty".[2] It was the era of "the jeweled style'", as Michael Roberts calls it, in which poets moved words like "building blocks" or "pieces" in a puzzle.[3] However, for Ausonius, the point of a cento was not the individual "rings" but the coherence and integrity of the new textual fabric.[4] Comparing his literary method with the game called *stomachion*, in which varying geometrical shapes of bone were laid out to form different images, he stresses the shared element of continuity rather than that of randomness:

---

1 Ermini 1909, 99: "il centone ha l'apparenza d'una catena d'oro, d'oro vergiliano, i cui anelli or piccoli, or grandi, or lucenti e ora rugginosi non bene s'allacciano gli uni con gli altri. L'anello lucido e forbito desta l'ammirazione, l'anello stridulo e rugginoso strappa un rimprovero."

2 Marrou 1938, 25: "On lisait Virgile non comme on contemple de haut un vaste paysage, mais comme on admire un collier de perles tenu entre les doigts, examinant chaque grain l'un après l'autre pour sa beauté propre."

3 Roberts 1989, 58: "Words are viewed as possessing a physical presence of their own, distinct from any considerations of sense or syntax. They may be moved like building blocks or pieces in a puzzle to create ever new formal constructs."

4 Formisano and Sogno 2010, 389.

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> hoc ergo centonis opusculum ut ille ludus tractatur, pari modo sensus diversi ut congruant, adoptiva quae sunt ut cognata videantur, aliena ne interluceant, arcessita ne vim redarguant, densa ne supra modum protuberent, hiulca ne pateant.
>
> And so this little work, the *Cento*, is handled in the same way as the game described, so as to harmonize different meanings, to make pieces arbitrarily connected seem naturally related, to let foreign elements show no chink of light between, to prevent the far-fetched from proclaiming the force which united them, the closely packed from bulging unduly, the loosely knit from gaping.
>
> *Cento Nuptialis, praefatio* 43–46, transl. MCGILL 2005, 3

In this chapter, we will examine different devices employed in Proba's *Cento* in order to achieve such greater patterns of coherence on various interpretative levels. It has been argued that Proba sets out to create a more neatly structured work than her biblical model. Through its almost symmetrical presentation of the Old and New Testament narratives (276 and 348 verses respectively), the *Cento* creates "an idealized image of the Bible as an artfully constructed and ordered book" following a bi-partite structure reminiscent to that of the *Aeneid*.[5] The principle of unification, not fragmentation, guides Proba's engagement with Virgil and the Bible, but unlike Ausonius, she sets out both to make disparate pieces "seem naturally related", and to show that they *are* naturally related (cf. verse 23).

Recreating Creation

Proba's *Cento* includes most events found in the opening of *Genesis*, but there are significant differences. Some stages of creation are abbreviated while others are amplified or even transposed.[6] These changes have been described as

5 Schnapp 1992, 111: "[…] as if autonomous, each of its halves reenacts the pattern of the other, commencing with a birth scene, followed by a banishment (the fall and the flight to Egypt), a universal calamity (the flood, the Crucifixion) and concluding with a triumphal exodus/exit—that of the Jews from Egypt, that of Christ from our world." Sandnes (2011, 68–69) argues that the symmetry is emphasized in response to charges against the Old and New Testaments for contradictions and inconsistencies.

6 This is a typical feature of Bible epics; see Roberts 1985, 108–135.

awkward,[7] or vivacious but wordy and partly inappropriate,[8] but it is crucial to note that it ‘corrects’ and reorganizes *Genesis* systematically according to Greco-Roman literary accounts of the creation of the universe. There is an especially strong tendency towards symmetry and a clearer sense of progression in these rearrangements. The creation begins with a ‘day zero,’ since Proba takes the declarations of new days in *Gen.* 1:5, 1:8, 1:13, 1:19, 1:23 and 1:31 as referring not to the previous but to the next phase of the making of the universe.[9] In this way the Old Testament account is adapted to a cosmogonic rationale according to which there cannot be a first day before the heavenly bodies, since time is measured by their movement. Proba also amalgamates the first and fourth days in *Genesis*. Accordingly, on her ‘day zero’ we find the creation not only of earth and heaven but also of the sun, moon and stars (*Gen.* 1:16 ≈ *Cento* 56–59). She describes the primordial void and the separation of light from darkness (*Gen.* 1:2–4 ≈ *Cento* 60–66), before once again returning to the fourth day as her God beholds, counts and renames the stars (*Gen.* 1:16–18 ≈ *Cento* 67–71). A long digression follows—heavy in re-use of the *Georgics*—on the division of the year into four seasons and on fertility (*Gen.* 1:14 ≈ *Cento* 72–81).

Once the progression of time is in place, Proba introduces the first day, in which the sea is separated from land (*Cento* 82–85). This merges the separation of water from heaven on the second day (*Gen.* 1:6–8), and of water from earth on the third (*Gen.* 1:9–10). After this, the centonist even anticipates phenomena that belong to the fifth day in *Genesis* and has God fill the sea with fish and various living creatures already at this stage (*Gen.* 1:20–22 ≈ *Cento* 86–90). The Old Testament account of creation is thus adapted in a systematic way, allotting each natural element its own day. On ‘day zero’ everything begins, with fire as the basic life-giving force; as Anchises puts it “there is a fiery vigor and heavenly origin in seeds” (*igneus est ollis vigor et caelestis origo seminibus*, *A* 6.730 ~ *Cento* 32 and 382). Subsequently, the creation of the sea and everything in it is not divided over several days, but concentrated to day one.

7 Smolak 1975, 355: “Proba und Hilarius stehen in gleicher Distanz zum Genesisbericht: beide konzipieren frei, können sich dem Zwang der Sechstageeinteilung aber nur durch die Vermeidung der bestimmten Zeitangaben—wie Hilarius—oder—wie Proba—durch die Anwendung eines in ihrem Fall plumpen poetischen Mittels entziehen.”

8 Cacioli 1969, 231: “Pur risultando più efficace, nel suo icastico laconismo, il racconto sacro della Genesi, la narrazione del centone non è mal architettata, i versi sono ben connessi e, nonostante una certa prolissità e l’improprietà di alcune espressioni veramente inopportune, la rappresentazione in alcuni tratti è abbastanza viva.”

9 Cf. R. Herzog 1975, 29 n. 105; Bažil 2007, 50–51.

On Proba's second day, she describes the emergence of vegetation on earth (*Gen.* 1:11–12 ≈ *Cento* 91–94). This corresponds to the third day in *Genesis*, but since the separation of water and land has been transposed to her first day, she can now devote this section to one natural element: earth. Likewise, Proba skips the fourth day (*Gen.* 1:14–19), since the creation of the heavenly bodies has already been relocated to her 'day zero'. Thus, on her third day she moves from earth to air and devotes this day exclusively to the creation of winged creatures (*Gen.* 1:20–22 ≈ *Cento* 95–98). The corresponding verses in *Genesis* deal with the creation of both birds and fish on the fifth day, but in Proba's account the different animals are redistributed according to the natural element they belong to.

With the four elements in place—fire, water, earth and air—Proba turns to the creation of wild and domestic land animals on her fourth day (sixth day in *Gen.* 1:24–25 ≈ *Cento* 99–106). Two days then pass (*iamque dies alterque dies processit*, 107) before the sixth day and the creation of man. Martin Bažil has compared this reallocation to Victorinus of Pettau's († c. 303) *On the Construction of the World*, in which the creation of animals is moved to the fifth day, thus separating their creation from humankind's.[10] But in the *Cento*, humans are twice removed from other creatures, not only highlighting their supremacy, but also establishing a conceptual time frame in which God, reflecting on the results of his labors, decides to make a creature to rule his creation (*Gen.* 1:25–26 ≈ *Cento* 108–115). God's repeated reflections on the creation in *Genesis* ("God saw that it was good") are thus replaced by one extended scene in the *Cento*, transforming the repetitious nature of Genesis into a clearly dramatized chain of events.

Verses from the first- and second books of the *Georgics* are are abundantly exploited throughout Proba's creation scene. This re-use is based on a notional equation between rural utopia and the early stages of the cosmos, established by Virgil himself in a description of the coming of spring:

> inque novos soles audent se germina tuto
> credere, nec metuit surgentis pampinus Austros
> aut actum caelo magnis Aquilonibus imbrem,
> sed trudit gemmas et frondes explicat omnis.
> Non alios prima crescentis origine mundi
> inluxisse dies aliumve habuisse tenorem
> crediderim: ver illud erat, ver magnus agebat

10 Bažil 2007, 56–58.

> orbis et hibernis parcebant flatibus Euri,
> cum primae lucem pecudes haussere virumque
> terrea progenies duris caput extulit arvis
> immissaeque ferae silvis et sidera caelo.
>
> *G* 2.332–342, ed. GEYMONAT [2008] 101

> The grass safely dares to face the nascent suns, nor does the vine tendril fear the South Wind's rising or showers launched from the skies by the blustering North, but puts forth buds and unfurls its every leaf. Such days as these, I can imagine well, shone at the dawn of the infant world and took no different course: springtime it was, the whole wide world was keeping spring, and the east winds spared their icy blasts: then the first cattle drank in the light, the earthborn race of men reared its head from the stony plains, and the woods were stocked with game, the firmament with stars.
>
> transl. FAIRCLOUGH 2006 [1916], 159–160

Verses from this passage are re-used in the introduction to the *Cento* with reference to the cosmogonic poetry of Musaeus/Moses (43–45 ~ *G* 2.336–338); here, in the account of the creation proper, Virgil's description of vegetation covering earth in spring becomes the first grass and herbs (92 ~ *G* 2.335). God observes his creation with the attentiveness of the skilled farmer (68–69 ~ *G* 2.270–271) and beholds the stars like an experienced sailor (71 ~ *G* 1.137). The winter equinox becomes the parting of light from darkness (66 ~ *G* 1.209) and portents of rainfall or storms become the animals created along with the elements of water and air (86 ~ *G* 1.383; 97 ~ *G* 1.410). Especially in the digression on the changing seasons (72–81), all but one hemistich (*Cento* 80 ~ *A* 1.623) derive from the *Georgics*.[11] This didactic poem dominates the intertextual matrix of the creation account, making these two worlds appear naturally related.

Adam, Eve and Foreshadowing

In the previous section, I suggested that Proba reorganizes *Genesis* to avoid repetitions and contradictory elements. This is especially true of the double creation of Adam and Eve on the sixth day in *Gen.* 1:26–28 and after the seventh

11 See table in Bažil 2009, 146–147.

in *Gen.* 2:7/21–22. Proba fuses these two versions; hence, on her sixth day God does not make man and woman together (*Gen.* 1:27) but only man out of clay (*Gen.* 2:7 ≈ *Cento* 116–117), yet he is made in God's likeness (*Gen.* 1:26–27 ≈ *Cento* 118–121):

iamque inproviso ¦ tantae pietatis imago — *A* 8.524 | 6.405
procedit ¦ nova forma viri ¦ pulcherrima primum, — *A* 3.592 | 3.591 | 9.253
os umerosque deo similis — *A* 1.589

Now an image of great piety suddenly | appeared for the first time, man's new form of wonderful beauty, | in face and shoulders like God
Cento 118–120

Since man needs a companion, God puts him to sleep and makes woman out of one of his ribs (*Gen.* 2:18–22 ≈ *Cento* 122–132). Proba does not mention the seventh day and God's rest (*Gen.* 2:2–3), but instead continues straight to Adam and Eve and their life in paradise.

This part of the narrative is rich in prefiguration.[12] Through the hypotext, the imminent disaster of the Fall is repeatedly foreshadowed in that a significant part of it derives from the tragic story of Dido in the *Aeneid*. The beginning of this episode, when Aeneas and his men prepare a meal after being shipwrecked near Carthage, is used to express the emergence of women, just as the flaying of the animals is used for God's flaying of Adam (*Cento* 127 ~ *A* 1.211). Eve is introduced as a "gift" (*donum*), originally representing Helen's cloak and dress brought by Aeneas to Carthage (*Cento* 129 ~ *A* 1.652). Stratis Kyriakidis has pointed to the comment made by Servius (ad *A* 1.650), that Dido receiving these objects is an omen of coming disaster.[13] When the same words refer to Eve in the *Cento* this means that "Woman", the divine gift, "forebodes the evil it bears within itself".[14] When Eve is created, she gleams in clear light (*claraque in luce refulsit*, 130), just as Venus makes Aeneas gleam when he first meets Dido (*Cento* 130 ~ *A* 1.588). In the *Aeneid*, this occurs in order to ignite erotic passion in Dido; accordingly, Kyriakidis argues that Proba "hints at the

12 The narratological counterpart is the prolepsis, i.e. when forthcoming events in a narrative are foreshadowed at an earlier phase of the narrative in an incomplete way, so that the end partially is exposed. Genette 1980, 67–79 distinguishes between partial and complete (external or internal) intradiegetic and extradiegetic prolepses; cf. Clark and Hatch 1981, 162–169.

13 Kyriakidis 1992, 126; cf. Margoni-Kögler 2001, 130.

14 Kyriakidis 1992, 126.

correspondingly disastrous consequences which will result for Adam because of Eve."[15] We should note, however, that the same Virgilian passage is used for Adam's being godlike "in face and shoulders like God" (*Cento* 120 ~ *A* 1.589). When Eve is about to eat the fruit from the tree of knowledge, she is "devoted to future calamity" (*infelix pesti devota futurae*, 200); Virgil so describes Dido in Book One of the *Aeneid* (*A* 1.712). Thus, Proba transmits the calamitous love between Dido and Aeneas to the misery of Adam, Eve, and the human race.

The scene in which Adam awakens (≈ *Gen.* 2:23–24) has been regarded as one of the few romantic descriptions of Adam and Eve, since the act of joining hands formed part of the Roman marriage ritual.[16]

ossaque et artus	*A* 7.458
coniugium vocat ¦ ac stupefactus numine pressit	*A* 4.172 ¦ 7.119
excepitque manu dextramque amplexus inhaesit.	*A* 8.124

and he called the bones and the limbs | his wife. Amazed at the divine will, he approached her, | stretched out his hand, grabbed hers and held it.

Cento 133–135

Yet, the Virgilian contexts negate any notion of romantic happiness: Eve's beautiful face is described in the same words as the son of Arcens right before his head is smashed in battle (*Cento* 131 ~ *A* 9.583), and her torso is that of the otherwise monstrous Scylla (*Cento* 131 ~ *A* 3.426). These hypotextual prefigurations of disaster are supplemented by a surface-level prolepsis, which has no equivalence in *Genesis*:

Fortunati ambo! ¦ si mens non laeva fuisset	*A* 9.446 ¦ 2.54/*E* 1.16
coniugis infandae: ¦ docuit post exitus ingens.	*A* 11.267 ¦ 5.523

Fortunate, both of them! If only the mind of the accursed wife | not had been so adverse, as their terrible end later showed.

Cento 170–171

When Adam and Eve finally taste the forbidden fruit, we are told, "immediately a new light sparked in their eyes" (*continuo nova lux oculis effulsit*, 206). This

15 Kyriakidis 1992, 127.

16 Witke 1971, 198; Clark and Hatch 1981, 111; Hunter 2007, 69–70.

represents the moment in which the eyes of Adam and Eve were opened, and they saw that they were naked (*Gen* 3:7). In the *Aeneid*, the verse refers to a light suddenly lit in the eyes of Turnus when the Trojan archer Pandarus accidentally locks the gates of the Trojan camp with the Rutulian hero still within the walls (9.731). Turnus slaughters Aeneas' men like a "giant Tiger let loose among helpless barnyard beasts" (*immanem veluti pecora inter inertia tigrim*, *A* 9.730). When transposed to the *Cento*, this scene highlights the change that Adam and Eve undergo: they are suddenly transformed into enemies in unknown territory. They feel frightened and cover their bodies with branches. Meanwhile, God follows their actions in yet another amplification of the biblical narrative (cf. *Gen*. 3:8):

At non haec nullis hominum ¦ rerumque repertor	*A* 11.725 ¦ 12.829
observans oculis ¦ caedes et facta tyranni	*A* 11.726 ¦ 8.483
praesensit: ¦ notumque furens quid femina posset.	*A* 4.297 ¦ 5.6
continuo invadit: ¦ "procul, o procul este profani"	*A* 4.265 ¦ 6.258
conclamat, ¦ caelum ac terras qui numine firmat.	*A* 6.259 ¦ 4.269
atque illi longe gradientem ac dira frementem	*A* 10.572
ut videre, metu versi retroque ruentes	*A* 10.573
diffugiunt silvasque et sicubi concava furtim	*A* 5.677
saxa petunt. piget incepti lucisque, ¦ neque auras	*A* 5.678 ¦ 6.733
dispiciunt; ¦ taedet caeli convexa tueri.	*A* 6.734 ¦ 4.451

> The Creator of human beings and things observed these things | with his eyes and sensed in advance murders and the acts of a tyrant. | For he knew what an insane woman was able to do. | Then immediately he assailed them with words: "Away, unjust, away with you!" | he cried, he who upholds heaven and earth through his divine power. | But as they saw him coming with wide strides and roaring | with anger, they turned around in fear, ran backwards, | took flight and stole away into the forest and the hollow | rocks. They regretted what they had started and shunned the sight of light | and air; it pained them to look towards the sky's vault.
>
> *Cento* 210–219

Several quotations here derive from the end of the fourth book of the *Aeneid*: God sensed in advance (*praesensit*) the future outrages of humanity just as Dido did when Aeneas was about to leave Carthage (*Cento* 212 ~ *A* 4.297); he "knew what an insane woman is able to do", like Aeneas when he sees smoke coming from Carthage as he leaves the city and its queen behind (*Cento* 212 ~ *A* 5.6). Like Dido, Adam and Eve cannot stand the sight of the heavens (*Cento* 219 ~

A 4.451). The hypotextual and textual effects of foreshadowing at the beginning of the narrative about Adam and Eve are now fulfilled. In this way, the tragic story of Dido runs throughout Proba's account of the creation of man.

Adam puts the blame on Eve with the Virgilian words of a god, Mercury, who tries to get Aeneas to leave Carthage by telling him that Dido "under her breast planned deceit and terrible sin" (*illa dolos dirumque nefas sub pectore versans*, 238 ~ *A* 4.563 ≈ *Gen.* 3:12). According to Kyriakidis, by recycling this verse Proba "betrays an exceptionally axiomatic tone in the condemnation of Woman", since in the original context, it is followed by the gnomic expression: "woman is a manifold and mutable thing" (*varium et mutabile semper | femina, A* 4.569–570).[17] It is not the narrator or God who utters these words, but Adam, who is hardly portrayed in a favourable light here. All the blame is put upon Eve, and this is achieved by repeating Mercury's rather deceitful words.

There is nothing out of place when the centonist follows *Genesis* and represents Eve as responsible for the Fall; it certainly does not make the biographical person Proba's "view of the female sex abundantly clear", as Kyriakidis would have it.[18] If anything, the use of Virgil's Dido introduces an element of ambiguity and may inspire in the reader conflicting feelings of compassion for Eve, as the questions raised in the fourth book of the *Aeneid* about individual desire and collective responsibility reverberate in the *Cento*. Eve is torn between the wills of Satan and God, just as Dido falls victim in the quarrel between Venus and Juno. Through this leading reminiscence, Eve seems fated to her transgression, and she does not choose to eat the forbidden fruit any more than Dido chooses to fall passionately in love with Aeneas.

Another tragic fate resonant in this passage is that of Amata, the wife of Latinus and mother of Lavinia. The verse describing Eve's wrongdoing, "approaching a greater crime, beginning a greater madness" (*maius adorta nefas maioremque orsa furorem*, 203 ~ *A* 7.386), derives from a passage describing how Amata is driven to madness by the poison from Allecto's serpent, sent by Juno to incite the war. In this sense, Amata's involuntary intoxication prefigures that of Eve. Like Dido, Amata is the tragic victim of the strife between Venus and Juno, a conflict that repeatedly resounds in Proba's narrative about Eve. When God utters his verdict for her crime, the verse used is similarly taken from a dialogue between Venus and Juno in which they plan the marriage of Dido and Aeneas (*Cento* 267 ~ *A* 4.100):

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17 Kyriakidis 1992, 132. Cf. also 134: "Proba's view of woman is summarised in *cent.* 212: … *notumque furens quid femina posset*, and derives from *Aeneid* 5,6, where, although the specific reference is to Dido, the allusion is to the female sex in general."

18 Kyriakidis 1992, 149.

tuque, o saevissima coniunx, *A* 11.158
non ignara mali, ¦ caput horum et causa malorum, *A* 1.630 ¦ 11.361
magna lues commissa tibi: ¦ heu perdita nescis *G* 4.454 ¦ *A* 4.541
nec quae te circum stent deinde pericula cernis. *A* 4.561
nunc ¦ morere, ut merita es, ¦ tota quod mente petisti:
A 2.550 ¦ 4.547 ¦ 4.100

And you, the ferocious wife, | not unaware of your evil deed, you are the head and cause of these evils, | you will atone for your great crimes. You are lost, don't you know it | and can't you see the dangers that surround you? | Now you die, as you deserve and have searched for with all your mind.

Cento 263–267

As pointed out by Michael Margoni-Kögler, Proba significantly modifies the punishment that God imposes on Eve. In *Genesis* (3:16), her punishment is twofold: She will have to suffer through childbirth and be subjected to her husband. This etiology for women's secondary status is not repeated by Proba and God's sentence on Eve is not very different from that imposed on Adam.[19] To sum up, through various forms of hypo- and hypertextual foreshadowing, the centonist unifies the separate narratives and provides resonance to the poem. Links are established above all between Dido's fatal passion for Aeneas and Eve's transgression.

Senses and Seduction

On a hypertextual level, the account of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (≈ *Gen.* 2:5–15) is characterized by references to the human senses.[20] The descriptive language appeals especially to the sense of sight in the introductory verses:

ecce autem primi sub limina solis et ortus *A* 6.255
devenere locos, ¦ ubi mollis amaracus illos *A* 1.365 etc. ¦ 1.693
floribus et dulci adspirans conplectitur umbra. *A* 1.694

19 Cf. Margoni-Kögler 2001, 133–134, esp. n. 76.

20 The ideas for this section came to me when listening Catherine Conybeare's paper "Avitus, Genesis, and the Mystery of Touch" (forthcoming).

hic ver purpureum ¦ atque alienis mensibus aestas, *E* 9.40 ¦ *G* 2.149
hic liquidi fontes, ¦ hic caeli tempore certo *G* 4.18 ¦ 4.100
dulcia mella premunt, ¦ hic candida populus antro *G* 4.101 ¦ *E* 9.41
inminet et lentae texunt umbracula vites. *E* 9. 42
invitant croceis halantes floribus horti *G* 4.109
inter odoratum lauri nemus ¦ ipsaque tellus *A* 6.658 ¦ *G* 1.127
omnia liberius nullo poscente ferebat. *G* 1.128

Behold! During the dawn and rising of the first sun, | they arrived at the place where mild marjoram | fragrantly embraced them with flowers and its sweet shade. | Here spring was purple, and summer came in unfamiliar months. | Here were clear springs, here, at a certain time of year, | they reaped the honey, here white poplar | hung above the cave, and pliant vines wove shady foliage. | Gardens enticed them with the scent of saffron flowers | in the midst of a fragrant laurel grove, and the earth itself | brought fourth crops generously without anyone asking for it.

Cento 160–169

The ekphrastic aim, to "bring the subject matter vividly before the eyes",[21] is pursued by appealing to the reader's spatial imagination: "Behold!" (*ecce*), and several times "here" (*hic*), and through effects of colour: the purple spring, the white poplar and golden flowers. The other senses also come into play: the garden has fragrant flowers, sweet honey and soft vines. There are reasons to have a closer look at one of the references to smell: the "mild marjoram | *fragrantly* embraced them with flowers and its sweet shade" (*Cento* 161–162 ~ *A* 1.693–694). In the *Aeneid*, these words describe Venus' gardens in Idalia as she takes Ascanius to her home while Cupid takes his place and makes Dido fall in love with Aeneas. The hypotext thus introduces connotations of seduction. It is in this enchanting setting that Eve and the serpent feast on the forbidden fruit (cf. *Gen.* 3:6):

sic ait, et dicto citius, ¦ quod lege tenetur, *A* 1.142 ¦ 12.819
subiciunt epulis ¦ olim venerabile lignum *A* 7.110 ¦ 12.767
instituuntque dapes ¦ contactuque omnia foedant. *A* 7.109 | 3.227
praecipue infelix pesti devota futurae *A* 1.712
mirataque novas frondes et non sua poma, *G* 2.82
causa mali tanti, ¦ summo tenus attigit ore. *A* 6.93 ¦ 1.737

21 See e.g. Webb 2009, 1, 14, 22, 51, 71, 201.

maius adorta nefas maioremque orsa furorem	*A* 7.386
heu misero coniunx ¦ aliena ex arbore germen	*A* 2.738 ¦ *G* 2.76
obicit ¦ atque animum ¦ subita dulcedine movit.	*A* 6.421 ¦ 10.648 ¦ 11.538

So he said, and sooner than he had spoken, they subjected | that which was guarded by law, the once venerated tree, to a banquet | and prepared a meal, polluting everything with their touch. | Especially the miserable wife, devoted to future calamity. | She marveled at the new leaves and at the fruit that was not hers, | the cause of so much evil, and she touched it lightly with her lips. | Approaching a greater crime, beginning a greater madness | the wife offered the fruit to her unfortunate husband from the tree | that did not belong to them, and touched his heart with a sudden sweetness.

Cento 197–205

The focus is now on touch. Earlier on, God warned Adam and Eve that the tree "must never be touched" (*numquam concessa moveri*, 150 ~ *A* 3.700) and advised them not to "stain their hands" (*conmaculare manus*, 154 ~ *E* 8.48). But Eve and the serpent touch it, "polluting everything with their touch", just as the Harpies destroy the sacrificial feast of the Trojans (*Cento* 199 ~ *A* 3.227). Eve touched (*attigit*) the fruit with her lips, like Dido when she makes libations and puts her lips to the chalice (*Cento* 202 ~ *A* 1.737). After this extended seduction scene of sensual pleasure that leads up to the Fall of man (*Gen.* 3:8–9), the negative signification of the senses comes to the fore:

atque illi longe gradientem ac dira frementem	*A* 10.572
ut videre, metu versi retroque ruentes	*A* 10.573
diffugiunt silvasque et sicubi concava furtim	*A* 5.677
saxa petunt. piget incepti lucisque, ¦ neque auras	*A* 5.678 ¦ 6.733
dispiciunt; ¦ taedet caeli convexa tueri.	*A* 6.734 ¦ 4.451
Nec longum in medio tempus, ¦ cum creber ad aures	*A* 9.395 ¦ 2.731
visus adesse pedum sonitus genitorque per auras	*A* 2.732
hunc, ubi vix multa maestum cognovit in umbra,	*A* 6.340
talibus adloquitur dictis ¦ atque increpat ultro:	*A* 8.611 ¦ 6.387

But as they saw him coming with wide strides and roaring | with anger, they turned around in fear, ran backwards, | took flight and stole away into the forest and the hollow | rocks. They regretted what they had started and shunned the sight of light | and air; it pained them to look towards the sky's vault. | Shortly thereafter the dense sound of footsteps | appeared to their

> ears, and the Father spoke to him through the air, | hardly recognizing the unfortunate man in the deep darkness, | uttering these words and scolding him:
>
> *Cento* 215–223

Adam and Eve are employed as 'internal focalizers' in order to mediate the magnitude of God. This distinguishes the passage, since the *Cento* in general is structured with external focalization. They fear the sight of him and thus deprive themselves of visual perception by hiding in the darkness. Here, the state of confusion and perceptive bewilderment of Aeneas as he flees from the Greeks through the streets of Troy (*visus adesse pedum sonitus*, 221 ~ *A* 2.732) is used since sight and sound impressions are weakened and merge for Adam and Eve. In re-using this scene, Proba modifies Virgil's "in the shadows" (*per umbras*), referring to Anchises fleeing with Aeneas to "in the air" (*per auras*) referring to God. Thus, a play on words runs through the line-endings, underscoring the perceptive separation between God and man that has now occurred: From the shadows, Adam and Eve cannot stand the sight of the air (*auras dispiciunt*, 218–219 ~ *A* 6.733–734), but the sound of God's steps reach their ears (*ad aures*, 220 ~ *A* 2.731), whereas God in the air (*per auras*, 221 ~ *A* 2.732) can hardly discern man hiding in the dark (*in umbra*, 222 ~ *A* 6.340). The theme of obscured vision is connected to sin in the Christian literary tradition,[22] and in the *Cento*, the concept is synthesized with Anchises' representation of the body as "a prison of darkness and blindness" that blunts the fiery life force that enters them: *neque auras* | *dispiciunt* (*Cento* 218–219 ~ *A* 6.733–734). These verses describing how Adam and Eve are driven out of the Garden of Eden correspond to the description of how the souls materialize in Anchises' speech. The analogy is powerful since, once they have left the *locus amoenus* of Eden, they recognize their corporeality and their blunted senses are turned into their enemy. As Adam later puts it when he explains himself to God: the aftertaste of the fruit is bitter (*Cento* 237 ~ *G* 2.126), and he trembles at the sound of God's voice (*Cento* 235 ~ *A* 10.615; 3.648). After God has uttered his verdict on man, woman and the serpent, the narrator reports that Adam was unable to hear or speak, which is not the case in *Genesis*:

> At iuvenem ¦ primum saevus circumstetit horror: *A* 7.780 ¦ 2.559

22 In Prudentius *Hamartigenia*, sin and heresy are associated with perverted vision. Cf. Dykes 2011, 36, 40; Malamud 2012, 178, 187–189.

deriguere oculi, ¦ nec se celare tenebris	*A* 7.447 ¦ 9.425
amplius aut ¦ notas audire et reddere voces.	*A* 9.426 ¦ 6.689

Then a ferocious horror surrounded the first young man. | His eyes stiffened, and he could neither hide in the darkness | any longer, nor understand familiar speech and answer.

Cento 269–271

With stiffened eyes and "in tears", man leaves the shadows with tactile caution—"with equal carefulness they placed their steps" (*flentes* | *et paribus curis vestigia figunt*, 275 ~ *A* 10.842; 6.159)—and enters a new world, no longer able to perceive the divine. Thus, there is degradation from the Garden of sensuous delights to the life after the Fall, when man lives deprived of true senses.

The Serpent and the Tree

Proba's presentation of the serpent in the Garden of Eden is rich in narratological and typological complexities that extend far beyond the Old Testament narrative ("Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made." *Gen.* 3:1):[23]

Iamque dies infanda aderat: ¦ per florea rura	*A* 2.132 ¦ 1.430
ecce inimicus atrox ¦ inmensis orbibus anguis	*G* 1.407 ¦ *A* 2.204
septem ingens gyros, septena volumina versans	*A* 5.85
nec visu facilis nec dictu affabilis ulli	*A* 3.621
obliqua invidia ¦ ramo frondente pependit,	*A* 11.337 ¦ 7.67
vipeream spirans animam, ¦ cui tristia bella	*A* 7.351 ¦ 7.325
iraeque insidiaeque et crimina noxia cordi.	*A* 7.326
odit et ipse pater: ¦ tot sese vertit in ora	*A* 7.327 ¦ 7.328
arrectisque horret squamis, et, ¦ ne quid inausum	*A* 11.754 ¦ 8.205
aut intemptatum scelerisve dolive ¦ relinquat,	*A* 8.206 ¦ 4.415 etc.
sic prior adgreditur dictis ¦ seque obtulit ultro:	*A* 6.387 ¦ 8.611

Now the accursed day had arrived. Behold! Through flowery fields | a cruel and hostile snake moving in enormous coils, | huge in seven gyres, winding in seven loops. | Difficult to behold, and impossible for all to

23 Cf. Schottenius 2010.

> speak of. | With envy it hung down from a green, crooked branch, | exhaling its viperous breath. In its heart | it longed for gloomy wars, anger, betrayal and heinous crimes. | Even the Father hated it. It changed so much in form | and was terrifying with its raised scales. And lest it should | leave any crime or deceit unattempted and untested, | the serpent spoke the following word and brought itself in her presence.
>
> *Cento* 172–182

Among the various reptilian monsters in the Virgilian hypotext in this passage, the sea serpents that kill Laocoön and his sons (*inmensis orbibus anguis* 173 ~ *A* 2.204) are very important in the *Cento*. These beasts will return at the crucifixion where Christ is tied to the cross like the snakes constrict Laocoön (*Cento* 617 ~ *A* 2.217), thus suggesting a typological connection between the original sin and the killing of Christ. Another important hypotextual figure in these lines is the snake sent by the fury Allecto to envenom queen Amata, wife of king Latinus (*Cento* 177 ~ *A* 7.351). As we will see this serpent will also return in the New Testament narrative where Satan tempting Christ is represented as a snake (*Cento* 430 ~ *A* 7.375), but Allecto reoccurs already a few lines down as we are told about God's opinion on the serpent. He hates it because it constantly changes its appearance (179). In the *Aeneid* (7.327–328) these words refer to Pluto's feelings towards Allecto (his own daughter) whose hair consists of snakes. Proba thus establishes a connection between the pagan gods of the underworld, the snake in Eden and Satan of the New Testament. This naturally chthonic and satanic representation of the snake is present in the opening lines of his speech to Eve, reusing three verses spoken by the spirit of Musaeus in Hades (*Cento* 183–185 ~ *A* 6.673–675). When the snake—rather than the *diabolos* of the synoptic gospels—later returns, Christ resists his temptation and punishes him: "Yield to God, stretched out on the ground with all of your body" (*cede deo,* | *toto proiectus corpore terrae,* 452 ~ *A* 5.467 and 11.87). Karla Pollmann has called this scene a "typological correspondence within the poem": Eve can be considered a 'type' corresponding to the 'antitype' Jesus who undoes her crime by resisting the temptation of the serpent.[24] Furthermore, as noted by Clark and Hatch, Christ's verdict of the snake in the *Cento* corresponds to God's verdict of the serpent in *Genesis* 3:14. And so, in this way Proba intertwines the serpent of the Old Testament with the *diabolos* of the Gospels, and a new character—based on typological links between *Genesis* and the Gospels—takes form. Through this narrative technique of merging

24 Pollmann 2004, 89. Cf. also Schottenius 2010.

biblical and non-biblical typologies, the character of Satan is elaborated and the biblical narrative amplified.

A similar technique is used for the Tree of knowledge. The serpent tempts Eve with the following words (cf. *Gen.* 3:1–5):

strata iacent passim sua quaeque sub arbore poma,	*E* 7.54
pocula sunt fontes liquidi: ¦ caelestia dona	*G* 3.529 ¦ 4.1
adtractare nefas: ¦ id rebus defuit unum.	*A* 2.719 ¦ 12.643
quid prohibet ¦ causas penitus temptare latentes?	*A* 5.631 ¦ 3.32

The apples are strewn around their trees on the ground | and your drinking cups are clear springs. It is not allowed | to touch the heavenly gift, this is the only thing missing. | What prevents you from exploring the causes that lie hidden deep?

Cento 186–189

Here, the serpent entices Eve to explore the "causes that lie hidden deep" (189), which in the Virgilian context refers to Aeneas insisting on plucking a twig from a tree during his stop in Thrace; but the tree bleeds human blood and soon Aeneas finds out that the Trojan hero Polydorus is trapped inside. Within the *Aeneid* this "pliant twig" (*lentum vimen*, *A* 3.31) foreshadows the golden bough, also a *lentum vimen* (*A* 6.137). This ties in with a greater parallelism between this mythological tree that holds the key to the underworld and the Tree of Knowledge, present already when God warns Adam and Eve to eat its fruit (cf. *Gen.* 2:9/16–17):

hac quicumque sacros ¦ decerpserit arbore fetus,	*A* 11.591 ¦ 6.141
morte luet merita: ¦ nec me sententia vertit.	*A* 11.849 ¦ 1.260

Anyone who plucks sacred shoots of this tree | will pay for it with well-deserved death, and no opinion changes my mind.

Cento 151–152

Also, when Adam explains himself to God, the forbidden fruit is described as one that its "host tree had not generated" (*quod non sua seminat arbor*, 243 ~ *A* 6.206), just like the golden bough. By repeatedly returning to this Virgilian scene and re-using the prefiguration of it in the Polydorus episode, a symmetry is highlighted between the model text (God warning Adam and Eve not to eat fruit from the tree of knowledge) and the source-text (the Sibyl instructing Aeneas on how to get down to the realm of the dead). Thus, in the end when

Adam and Eve are expelled from paradise, they walked "side by side [...] along a darkness of paths, hastened through the midway region" (*et pariter gressi per opaca viarum* | *corripiunt spatium medium*, 273–274 ~ *A* 6.633–634), describing the *Catabasis* of Aeneas in Virgil.

The Tree of Knowledge also returns, as it were, in the New Testament narrative, in Proba's infamous retelling of the Crucifixion:[25]

tollitur in caelum clamor cunctique ¦ repente	*A* 11.745 ¦ 12.462 etc.
corripuere sacram effigiem manibusque cruentis	*A* 2.167
ingentem quercum decisis undique ramis	*A* 11.5
constituunt ¦ spirisque ligant ingentibus | ipsum,	*A* 6.217 ¦ 2.217 ¦ 2.190 etc.
tendebantque manus ¦ pedibus per mutua nexis—	*A* 6.314 ¦ 7.66
triste ministerium—, ¦ sequitur quos cetera pubes,	*A* 6. 223 ¦ 5.74
ausi omnes inmane nefas ausoque potiti.	*A* 6.624

They raised their cry to the skies and suddenly everyone | seized the holy figure. With their bloody hands | they put up a large oak tree with cut branches, | tied him with huge twisted bands, | and stretched out his hands and pressed his feet together |—a terrible undertaking—and the other young men followed them. | All dared an atrocious sin and enjoyed what they dared.

Cento 614–620

Here the crowd seizes Christ, touching his "holy figure" (*sacra effigies*) (pp. 181–82), and with their bloody hands, they raise a "large oak tree" (616). As with the character of the snake, the symbolic attributes of the tree keep accumulating. The Polydorus tree and the tree with the golden bough have been alluded to and established as a semi-biblical typology where they correspond to the tree of knowledge in Paradise. Here Christ is crucified on a tree, thus connecting the original sin of Eden with the New Testament sacrifice and redemption.

Moreover, as mentioned above, Christ is tied to the tree with "huge twisted bands" (*spirisque ligant ingentibus ipsum*, 617 ~ *A* 2.217, 2.190), using the description of the sea serpents that attack Laocoön and his sons. This verse prompts the reader to reflect upon the crucifixion in the light of Laocoön's tragic faith and gruesome death, but these snakes have also been typologically connected

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25 Opelt 1964, 115–116.

to Satan (*Cento* 173 ~ *A* 2.204). By combining tree and snake in the crucifixion the poet activates a rich spectrum of biblical as well as semi-biblical typologies, gradually established and built up throughout the *Cento*.

The Decline of Mankind

In the last part of the Old Testament narrative, the hypotextual links between the account of the Ages of Man in the *Georgics* and the biblical narration of the decline after the Fall are established. To begin with, Eve gives birth to a "hardened race" *durum genus* (280 ~ *G* 1.63) after ten months of suffering (cf. *Gen.* 4:1). In the Virgilian hypotext, this expression famously describes Prometheus' son Deucalion creating man by hurling stones into the world. A link is also produced within the *Cento* where God's creation of man is described with the subsequent verse in the *Georgics*, which describes the work awaiting this "hardened race": "the rich earth of the year's first few months" (*pingue solum primis extemplo a mensibus anni*, 117 ~ *G* 1.64). In this way, the creation of Adam and Eve is connected to the birth of their children via the Virglian text. Their time on earth starts off without greater difficulties and man learns to master the land "through technology" (*inde per artem*, 280 ~ *A* 10.135), just like the first farmers of the *Georgics*. Yet, the sin of envy soon begins to impede the first humans and Cain slays Abel (285–289 ≈ *Gen.* 4:3–8). After the fratricide, earth turns against man and the degeneration of humanity intensifies (290–306 ≈ *Gen.* 6:5–7). The greater part of the verses in the episode illustrating the decline derives from the theodicy of work in the *Georgics* (1.118–159).

tum genitor ¦ virus serpentibus addidit atris	*A* 3.102 ¦ *G* 1.129
mellaque decussit foliis ignemque removit	*G* 1.131
praedarique lupos iussit pontumque moveri	*G* 1.130
et passim rivis currentia vina repressit.	*G* 1.132
mox et frumentis labor additus, ut mala culmos	*G* 1.150
esset robigo ¦ et victum seges aegra negaret.	*G* 1.151 ¦ *A* 3. 142
tum laqueis captare feras et fallere visco	*G* 1.139
inventum, et ¦ duris urgens in rebus egestas	*G* 1.140 ¦ 1.146
movit agros, curis acuens mortalia corda,	*G* 1.123

Then the Father gave poison to the malicious snakes | and shook off honey from the leaves and hid away fire, | and he ordered the wolves to hunt for prey and the sea to be in motion. | Gradually he stopped the wine from

> flowing in streams. | Soon the toil of crops was added, as evil infestation | devoured the stalks and diseased harvests denied food. | Then capturing wild animals with snares and deceiving them with lime | was invented, and under these difficult circumstances urgent need | drove the fields, spurring on human hearts through troubles.
>
> *Cento* 290–298

In the corresponding biblical passage, Cain is cursed for the fratricide: "So now you are cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth." (*Gen* 4:11–12). Proba shifts the perspective. In the Bible, God pronounces human beings to be evil and regrets having made them. In the *Cento*, the narrator lists punishments inflicted upon man. God sends venom to he serpents, takes away fire and honey, make the harvest turn bad, etc. Since this specific episode of the *Georgics* constituted the leading reminiscence here, the working moral that Jupiter imposed upon man reverberates in God's punishment of the human race. Jupiter's motive for making life on earth tougher for mankind was his wish to strengthen her. Under more challenging conditions, mankind would be forced to develop skills to enable her to handle earth and consequently also avoid decaying into apathy and idleness. These positive intentions are inevitably transmitted onto the *Cento* to some extent, which has a certain consequence for the theology conveyed in this episode. Proba employs a number of verses that describe the iron race in the second book of the *Georgics* in her episode on the degeneration of human behavior:

gaudent perfusi sanguine fratrum	*G* 2.510
condit opes alius defossoque incubat auro	*G* 2.507
nec doluit miserans inopem ¦ dextramque tetendit.	*G* 2.499 ¦ *A* 10.823

> They rejoiced drenched in the blood of their brothers. | Others collected treasures and riches and brooded their hidden gold. | They did not take pity on the poor, they did not extend their right hand.
>
> *Cento* 304–306

By putting verses referring to the Iron Age at work here, the poet links the Christian concept of sinfulness to the violence associated with this specific moment of decline in the Greco-Roman narrative about the first generations of mankind. This parallel is further underlined by the re-use of the expression "race of iron" (*ferrea progenies*, 300 ~ *G* 2.341) in her description of the emer-

gence of mankind during this period.[26] After the fratricide, mankind is defined as one belonging to a "paler age" (*decolor aetas*, 299 ~ *A* 8.826–827), just like the human race that followed after the age of Saturn in Evander's narrative about the history of Latium.

The abbreviated narrative about the flood and Noah's salvation (307–318 ≈ *Gen.* 6:8–22) ends with a verse from an episode describing the concept *bugonia*,[27] which implies the re-birth of a stock of dead bees through the sacrifice of an ox or a bull. Proba thus re-activates the analogy of man and bees (316~ *A* 4.282) (pp. 118–22) and marks the era of a new generation, the salvation of which will be the topic of the latter part of her poem.

Summary and Conclusions

Proba's account of the Creation deviates from the order provided in *Genesis* in several aspects mainly in that it is structured around the four elements of Greco-Roman cosmology: fire, water, earth and air. This peculiarity produces a sense of cohesion between the pagan and Christian traditions in the spirit of the basic principle of the text, that is, to "declare that Virgil sang about the pious feats of Christ" (*Vergilium cecinisse* [...] *pia munera Christi*, 23). On the hypotextual level, the first two books of the *Georgics* constitute a leading reminiscence in this part of the narrative, affiliating the rural landscapes of the Golden Age with Christian paradise. In the passages dealing with Adam and Eve, the Virgilian verses create foreshadowing in the biblical narrative of the *Cento*. Horrific and calamitous characters and events from the Virgilian hypotext are repeatedly invoked to prefigure the imminent disaster of the Fall, not least Dido's story in the *Aeneid*. This reoccurring pattern of textual recycling connects the hypo- and hypertexts at various levels, transmitting the tragic dimension of the Carthaginian queen's disastrous love onto these specific events. Another elaborate textual pattern is established in the passage describing the Fall of mankind from the Garden of Eden through a literary play on the senses. The text appeals to sight in the description of paradise, focuses on touch and taste when the serpent and Eve eat the forbidden fruit, whereas after the Fall, the senses of Adam and Eve are benumbed.

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26 Most Virgilian manuscripts give *terrea progenies*, which makes this an indirect witness to this alternative reading; Sineri 2011, 195.

27 Cf. Sineri 2011, 200–201.

Various kinds of typologies are employed as a persistent literary and exegetical method in order to bridge the gaps between the hypotexts. A striking example is the serpent, who is constructed by a number of hypo- and hypertextual narrative layers: The snake that killed Laocoön is typologically connected to the biblical one, since it is re-used in the temptation of Eve in paradise and then returns in the scene where Christ is crucified. Just as the sea serpents silenced the prophet Laocoön and stopped him from revealing the purpose of the wooden horse to the Trojans, Christ—a prophet of the future and of eternal life—is crucified. The typologies connected to serpents do not end there: The snake that Allecto sent to Amata is re-used twice, first in the episode with the forbidden fruit and later in connection to the temptation of Christ. But Christ prevails and punishes the snake to crawl on the ground, an action that corresponds to God's verdict of the serpent in *Genesis* 3:14. In this way, the serpent of the Old Testament is connected to the Satan of the Gospels, and a new character based on typological links between *Genesis* and the Gospels is established through the Virgilian text. Another important symbol in the *Cento* is the tree of knowledge that is constructed with allusions to the Polydorus tree and the tree with the golden bough in the *Aeneid*. Since Christ is crucified on a tree in the *Cento*, the original sin of Eden is connected with the New Testament sacrifice and redemption. By reintroducing the tree and the serpent in the crucifixion scene, a rich spectrum of biblical and semi-biblical typologies, gradually established and built up throughout the *Cento*, is activated. Similarly, the poet establishes a parallelism between the Greco-Roman 'Ages of Man' and the biblical 'Fall of man'. This exegetic and literary technique forms the kernel of the poem, epitomizing its explicit principle of cultural synthesis and bringing notions of coherence and structure to the fore.

CHAPTER 6

The Gospel of Proba

Towards the end of the previous chapter, 'typology' was invoked as a useful term to describe the complex interrelationships between characters and events in the *Cento* and the biblical and Virgilian hypotexts. By associating moments in Virgil's poems to biblical episodes, the *Cento* demonstrates allegorical connections between the two, and Proba fulfills her promise to relate the "mysteries" of Virgil (12) and declare that the poet "sang of the pious feats of Christ" (23). Thus, when verses pertaining to Hercules are repeatedly used in the context of Christ's ascension, this leading reminiscence establishes a semi-biblical typology with the apotheosis of the Greco-Roman hero, not unlike Clement and Origen who called Jesus "the real Hercules" (p. 186). Furthermore, by re-using the same Virgilian passages for different characters and events in *Genesis*/*Exodus* and the Gospels, Proba indicates typological links between them and achieves internal prefigurations within her own work. In this regard she follows the Gospels, where it is often pointed out that Christ fulfills ancient events and prophesies (e.g. John 3:14). In this final chapter, we will explore how Proba uses these devices to construct her Latin hexameter Gospel.

Christ and Typology

It has been observed that Proba's Christ is represented as a Roman hero.[1] Unlike the Gospels, the narrator of the *Cento* emphasizes the physical appearance of Christ. As he returns after being tempted by Satan we are told that "he stood in the middle | of the numerous crowds, and everyone looked up on him with his mighty shoulders" (*medium nam plurima turba* | *hunc habet atque umeris extantem suspicit altis*, 461–462 ~ *A* 6.667–668). According to Clark and Hatch, Christ has a "magnificent and commanding presence" in such verses, rendering him like a Roman epic hero.[2] This sort of approach to the *Cento* is widespread, but in this chapter I wish to stress the ways in which the characters are always more protean than that. We should note that these verses in Virgil refer to

1 Clark and Hatch 1981². Cf. also Bright 1984, 87; Clark 1986, 146; Salisbury 2001, 288; Harvey 2004, 382; Worth 2007, 67; Curran 2012, 337–338.

2 Clark and Hatch (1981²) 33–34.

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Musaeus, thus placing Christ within a previously created pattern of correspondences. By linking him to Musaeus/Moses (pp. 127–29) in these verses that lead up to the Sermon on the Mount, a typology is established where Proba's Christ becomes the antitype corresponding to Moses on Mount Sinai (*Exod.* 19–20). Similarly, when Christ is born, the narrator tells us that "an image of the beloved Father came down" (*subiit cari genitoris imago*, 349), re-using the scene where a visual memory of Anchises flickers before Aeneas' eyes as he witnesses the death of Priam (*A* 2.560). Christ is thus connected to Adam, who was created in God's likeness (*tantae pietatis imago*, 118 ~ *A* 6.405 about Aeneas) and after the Fall fears the "gloomy image" of God (*tristis imago*, 233 ~ *A* 6.695 about Anchises). In this way, Adam, Christ, and their relationship to God are connected by way of the *Aeneid*. There are also hypotextual connections between the instructions given to Adam and Christ by God. God tells Adam (cf. *Gen.* 2:15):

haec domus, haec patria est, ¦ requies ea certa laborum.	*A* 7.122 ¦ 3.393/8.46
his ego nec metas rerum nec tempora pono:	*A* 1.278
imperium sine fine dedi, ¦ multosque per annos	*A* 1.279 ¦ 1.31/*G* 4.208
non rastros patietur humus, non vinea falcem.	*E* 4.40

This is your home, this is your native land, a safe rest from toil. | For these I set no times or bounds of things, | I have given an unlimited power, and for many years | the soil will not be subjected to the plow, the vines not to the knife.

Cento 141–144

This passage consists of three promises related to prophecies in the Virgilian texts: The first hemistich forms part of Aeneas' exclamation when he realizes that Celaeno's prophecy has been fulfilled and that he has arrived at his destination, and the limitlessness of Adam's power in Eden is taken from Jove's promise to Venus that Aeneas will found the Roman empire (*Cento* 142–143 ~ *A* 1.278–279). Through the final reference to the fourth *Eclogue* (*Cento* 144 ~ *E* 4.40), an analogy between life in Eden and the Golden Age is established. The poet thus highlights the redemptive power of Christ by returning to this passage when describing the flight to Egypt from Herod (cf. Matt. 2:13–14):

hic natum ¦ angusti subter fastigia tecti	*A* 1.407 ¦ 8.366
nutribat teneris inmulgens ubera labris.	*A* 11.572
hic tibi prima, puer, ¦ fundent cunabula flores,	*E* 4.18 ¦ 4.23

mixtaque ridenti ¦ passim cum baccare tellus *E* 4.20 ¦ 4.19
molli paulatim ¦ colocasia fundet acantho. *E* 4.28 ¦ 4.20

Here, under the roof of a lowly house | she nourished her son, giving milk from her breasts to his soft lips. | Here, child, your first cradle would scatter flowers for you | and the earth would scatter here and there Egyptian lilies | mixed with smiling cyclamen, gradually with soft acanthus.

Cento 375–379

Adam's failure to rule with unlimited power over the new empire caused the end of the Golden Age, but Christ returns to fulfill what Adam did not succeed with (cf. Matt. 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22):[3]

a te principium, tibi desinet. ¦ accipe, testor, *E* 8.11 ¦ *A* 11.559
o mea progenies: ¦ qua sol utrumque recurrens *A* 7.97 ¦ 7.100
aspicit Oceanum, ¦ perfecto laetus honore *A* 7.101 ¦ 3.178
omnia sub pedibus ¦ vertique regique videbis. *A* 7.100 ¦ 7.101
tu regere imperio populos, ¦ matresque virosque, *A* 6.851 ¦ 2.797
iam pridem resides animos desuetaque corda *A* 1.722
ignarosque viae me cum miseratus ¦ inertes *G* 1.41 ¦ *E* 8.24
adgredere et votis iam nunc adsuesce vocari. *G* 1.42

From you was the beginning, and with you it will end. Listen, my child, | I promise you: everything that the sun overlooks during its journey between | the two oceans, you will happily see, with full honor, | turned under your feet and ruled. | You will rule the peoples with power. Feel compassion, as I do, | for mothers and men whose souls long been in hibernation and whose | hearts have become unaccustomed. Come to the aid of the sluggish people | who are ignorant of the way, and get used to being called for in prayers.

Cento 405–412

A substantial part of these exhortations derive from an episode in which Faunus' ghost speaks to Latinus in a prophetic revelation, telling him not to wed his daughter to a Latin (i.e. to Turnus), but to a foreigner (*Cento* 406–408 ~ *A* 7.97 and 7.100–101). This mirrors the contact between God and his incarnation. The following hemistich similarly re-uses the proverbial exhortation of

3 Cf. Clark and Hatch 1981, 164–165.

Anchises' ghost about the task of the Roman people: *tu regere imperio populos* (*Cento* 409 ~ *A* 6.851). God's speeches to Adam and Christ are both constructed from prophecies and other key-passages dealing with the destiny of the Roman Empire. This establishes an analogy between Christ's spiritual empire and that of the Romans. Aeneas was the prototype, not only of Caesar Augustus and the emperors, but also of Christ: The obedience to one's divine mission and acceptance of one's fate are cornerstones of Virgilian as well as Biblical *pietas*.[4]

We should bear in mind, however, that the selection and appropriation of verses connects Christ to a series of other Virgilian models too. One such example is found in the description of the resurrection:

Ecce autem primi ¦ volucrum sub culmine cantus:	*A* 6.255 ¦ 8.456
ingreditur linquens antrum, ¦ spoliisque superbus	*A* 6.157 ¦ 8.202
ibat ovans, ¦ pulsuque pedum tremit excita tellus,	*A* 6.589 ¦ 12.445
vulneraque illa gerens ¦ foribus sese intulit altis.	*A* 2.278 ¦ 11.36

Behold! At the first singing of the birds under the sky, | he left the cave, stepped out and walked onwards, proud of his prey, | rejoicing, and the earth shook at his steps. | Wearing those wounds he appeared at the high doors.

Cento 657–660

The model of this "proud" Christ, whose strength makes the earth tremble, is none other than Hercules after the death of Geryon (*Cento* 658 ~ *A* 8. 202). Here, Hercules functions as a component in a semi-biblical typology: He foreshadows the resurrection and ascension of Christ, since he underwent apotheosis after his death. This kind of representation of Hercules was also found in visual representations from the end of the third and the fourth century in Rome, where he was occasionally accompanied with images of Christ and episodes from the Old Testament.[5] As Christ afterwards moves towards the crowds, he is "wearing those wounds" (*vulneraque illa gerens*, 660 ~ *A* 2.278), just as Hector presents himself to Aeneas in a dream, still wearing the wounds from being dragged around the city-walls of Troy. In terms of semi-biblical typology: Hector's sacrifice for Troy (and thereby for Rome) prefigures that of Christ for the Christians, especially for the Christianized Roman Empire.

4 Cf. Cacioli 1969, 219–220; Clark and Hatch 1981², 35–36.

5 Jaczynowska 1981, 660–661.

Destabilizing Gender

Readings of Christ in the *Cento* as a patriarchal Roman hero cannot escape being undermined by the connections to female characters in the hypotext. Once Herod ceases with his killings (Matt. 2:19), Christ appears in public and astounds young people and mothers everywhere (cf. Luke 2:46–48):

> illum omnis tectis agrisque effusa iuventus *A* 7.812
> attonitis inhians animis ¦ prospectat euntem, *A* 7.814 ¦ 7.813
> turbaque miratur matrum: ¦ "qui spiritus illi, *A* 7.813 ¦ 5.648
> qui vultus vocisque sonus vel gressus eunti est!" *A* 5.649

> Every young person poured forth from the houses and fields. | They were stunned in their hearts and stood gaping at his steps. | A crowd of mothers were astonished: "Just look at his spirit, | his face, the sound of his voice, his steps!"
>
> *Cento* 384–387

The recycling of Virgil's description of the people's admiration for the Amazon maiden warrior Camilla in verses 384–386 alludes to her self-sacrifice, thus foreshadowing the crucifixion. The last two verses derive from the speech of the Trojan nurse Pyrgo, as she recognizes that it is not Beroë who is standing before the Trojan women, but the goddess Iris, who has assumed her shape. In this way, Proba points to the people's recognition of the divine status of Christ on the hypotextual level. Henriette Harich-Schwarzbauer has further discussed the qualities of Iris who, like Christ, moves between the realms of human beings and gods. Through these alternative female types, Harich-Schwarzbauer argues that Proba destabilizes the Aeneas–Christ typology.[6] Soon after this, during the baptism of Christ, Iris is picked up and developed into a leading reminiscence as the dove/Holy Spirit (*columba*) "flew down and stayed above his head" (*devolat et supra caput astitit*, 398 ~ *A* 4.702 ≈ Matt. 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22; John 1:32) of Christ. The re-used verse refers to the same goddess but in a completely different context: when she is about to free Dido from her body at the end the fourth book of the *Aeneid*. Here, Iris stands for the divine nature that Christ and the Holy Spirit have in common, and the baptism becomes analogous to the soul being freed from the body. But in order for this parallelism to work, Christ must become first a goddess and then a tragic heroine.

6 Harich-Schwarzbauer 2009, 343–344.

In fact, the main characters in the *Cento* are not constituted exclusively by verses representing men or women in the hypotext: Proba establishes a typology between Jove and God as the eternally all-powerful father (e. g. *Cento* 29 ~ *A* 10.18; *Cento* 64 ~ *A* 10.100),[7] but inevitably ends up destabilizing this analogy. In the speech directed by God to the Son after the baptism, Proba recycles Venus' speech to her son Cupid: "My Son, you alone are my strength and my great power" (*nate, meae vires, mea magna potentia, solus* 403 ~ *A* 1.664).[8] This adaptation has caused mixed feelings for readers of the *Cento*.[9] Karl Olav Sandnes has argued that this is an example of Proba choosing "the wording" without taking into account the "context from which the wording was taken".[10] But this intentionalist interpretative model inhibits us to recognize a hypertextual structure in which the pagan goddess of love is analogous to God. Venus' addressing her son (*nate*) is re-used in the poet's invocation of Christ in the introduction to the poem (*Cento* 32 ~ *A* 1.665), and in God's exhortation to Christ after his baptism, the Son is ordered to rule a people whose "souls [have] long been in hibernation and whose hearts have become unaccustomed" (*iam pridem resides animos desuetaque corda*, 410). In the *Aeneid*, this describes Cupid kindling a new love in Dido (*A* 1.722). The analogy between Cupid and Christ is significant: the Son of God is sent to earth to awaken the human race through love. In this configuration, God becomes analogous to Venus. The typology Jove-God is thus destabilized and a female element becomes part of the Christian God.

My suggestion is not that Proba necessarily set out to destabilize gender boundaries, but rather I want to highlight the polysemy of the cento-form that makes readings of the *Cento* as an idealization of masculine heroism problematic; the hypotext constantly outflanks any such stability for God and Christ.

Heroic Mary

Because of the identification of Christ with Cupid as a deity of love and with Aeneas as a Roman hero, not only God, but also Mary is connected to their

7 For other re-uses in early Christian literature; cf. Courcelle 1984, 637–639.

8 Cf. Paulinus of Nola, *Carmen* 21.446 (de Hartel 1894, 172), who applies it on Saint Felix; Courcelle 1984, 125, n. 664.

9 Hagendahl 1958, 189–190; Herzog 1975, 42–43.

10 Sandnes 2011, 162.

mother Venus. This link is found when she is first mentioned in the proem to the New Testament:

quom femina primum	*A* 8.408
virginis os habitumque gerens ¦—mirabile dictu—	*A* 1.315 ¦ 1.439 etc.
nec generis nostri puerum nec sanguinis edit,	*E* 8.45

> … when at first a woman, | who wore the guise and appearance of a maiden—wonderful to relate!—| gave birth to a boy who was neither of our race nor of our blood.
>
> *Cento* 340–342

In the Virgilian context, the *femina* in the introductory verse describes woman's toil of weaving in the early morning hour in general terms: Mary is a woman, but she is "blessed among women" according to Luke 1:28 and 42. Hence, in the *Cento* she "wears the appearance and guise of a maiden", just like Venus when she comes to Aeneas disguised as a young huntress to tell him about Carthage and Dido (*Cento* 341 ~ *A* 1.315). In this way, the holy (and almost divine) status of Mary as the virgin mother is expressed. In the third verse, this link to the goddess of love is strengthened by recycling a description of the birth of ruthless Cupid from a completely different Virgilian context (*E* 8.45).[11]

A notable feature of this part of Proba's narrative is that Joseph is left out altogether. This radical modification of the Gospels could be interpreted as a way of presenting Mary as a heroic protagonist in this passage, similar to the representations of early female martyrs such as Perpetua († 203), who nurtured her child alone in prison (*The Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas* 3.6–9 etc.). However, scholars have generally opted for various other interpretations. For instance, it has been argued that since ideals of asceticism and celibacy are supposedly absent in the *Cento*, Mary's being alone puts emphasis on her maternity.[12] Other scholars have argued what seems to be the opposite: Proba does not assign any "female attributes" to Mary, thus making her "impersonal", especially in comparison to Eve. The reason for such a representation would be to lend "divinity to the person of Christ", which would be incompatible with a

11 The exact wording: "a boy not of our species and our blood" also fits into the contemporary anti-Arian controversy on the essence of Christ. Cf. Herzog 1975, 42; Fassina 2004, 18–21.

12 Clark and Hatch 1981, 111: "there is not a single verse in the 694 lines of Proba's *Cento* which as much as hints that she believed asceticism to be the superior mode of Christian living. Nowhere does she present either Jesus or Mary as a model for the Christian celibate; it is rather Mary's maternity she stresses."

human, feminine mother.[13] To my mind, both characterizations fail to capture the role played by Mary in the *Cento*. When rumor of Christ's birth reaches the king (Herod) and kindles his anger (*Cento* 357–359 ≈ Matt. 2:3), Mary senses the imminent danger and sends away her child:

matrisque adlabitur auris.	*A* 9.474
illa dolos dirumque nefas ¦ haut nescia rerum	*A* 4.563 ¦ 12.227
praesensit motusque excepit prima futuros.	*A* 4.297
praescia venturi ¦ furtim mandarat alendum,	*A* 6.66 ¦ 3.50
dum curae ambiguae, dum ¦ mens exaestuat ira.	*A* 8.580 ¦ 9.798

> [The rumor] also reached the ears of the mother. | She, who was not ignorant of the cruelty and atrocities, | knew of it beforehand and avoided the future turmoil first of all. | Aware of the future, she sent away her son in secret to be cared for, | as long as uncertainty prevailed and the [king's] mind was boiling with rage.
>
> *Cento* 359–363

By omitting Joseph and the angel coming to him in a dream (Matt. 2:13–14), Herod's anger is evaded through the prescience of Mary alone. On the hypotextual level, the horizon of this foreshadowing is even more distant: in the *Aeneid*, the first of these verses describes how Euryalus' mother learns about the death of her son. Accordingly, in this context, it could be taken as foreboding the future death of Christ. In the following verse, Mercury's speech to Aeneas, dissuading him from staying with Dido, is used for the second time in the *Cento*. The whole verse was previously used for Adam blaming Eve for her trickery before God: "Under her breast she planned deceit and terrible sin" (*illa dolos dirumque nefas sub pectore versans*, 238 ~ *A* 4.563; (p. 145)). Now, however, this negative characterization is changed into a positively charged ability. Proba's Mary becomes the twofold fulfillment and antitype of both Eve and Dido. This

13 Kyriakidis 1992, 135–136: "From the point of view of external characteristics, the relevant references are particularly scanty and are concerned with the entirely general features of Mary as a woman […] and as a virgin […] This absence of detail as to her personal characteristics and of comment on her feminine nature makes Mary nearly 'impersonal'." And p. 142: "We have already seen, with the specific loans from the Vergilian work, the attempt of the poetess to uncouple Mary as far as is possible from the individual characteristics of the female sex […] Proba wanted to project Mary's protective role as mother and her efforts to ensure the survival of her child, but not her role as a woman in the wider sense." Cf. also Corsaro 2007, 33, 42.

typology is further developed in the next verse, where Dido's preknowledge of Aeneas' plans to leave is re-used (*Cento* 361 ~ *A* 4.297).

On the hypotextual level, Mary is also equated with goddesses and prophets. Her knowledge of the future is expressed by re-using that of Juturna, who comes to the aid of her brother Turnus in battle disguised as a man (*Cento* 360 ~ *A* 12.227), and also that of the Sibyl of Cumae (*Cento* 362 ~ *A* 6.66). It is through this divine and prophetic power of intuition and ability to act quickly that they escape Herod as he sends out his soldiers to kill all infants, filling the cities with terror and lamentation (*Cento* 364–371 ≈ Matt. 2:16–18). The mother takes her child to a stable in order to hide and nourish it, thus combining the flight to Egypt (cf. Matt. 2:13–14) with Christ being put in a manger at his birth (cf. Luke 2:7):

at mater ¦ gemitu non frustra exterrita tanto,	*G* 4.333 ¦ 4.353
ipsa sinu prae se portans, ¦ turbante tumultu,	*A* 11.544 ¦ 6.857
infantem fugiens ¦ plena ad praesaepia reddit.	*A* 11.541 ¦ *G* 3.495
hic natum ¦ angusti subter fastigia tecti	*A* 1.407 ¦ 8.366
nutribat teneris inmulgens ubera labris.	*A* 11.572

> But the mother, who was frightened by all the crying—not in vain—| carried her child in her bosom through this raging disorder | and fled to a well-stocked stable. | Here, under the roof of a lowly house | she nourished her son, giving milk from her breasts to his soft lips.
>
> *Cento* 372–376

The leading reminiscence here is the Virgilian description of Metabus' flight from Privernum with the infant Camilla, feeding her by letting her suckle a mare. Kyriakidis sees this transgression of gender-boundaries as deriving from Proba's wish to "project Mary's protective role as a mother and her efforts to ensure the survival of her child". Yet, he separates this quality from her identity as a woman: it has nothing to do with "her role as a woman in the wider sense". Therefore, this scholar finds it perplexing that Joseph is left out since Proba's "attitude towards Woman has already been hinted at in the first unit with reference to Eve".[14] His solution to this problem is found in a "second reading [...] which reveals itself to the cultured reader".[15] This constructed 'cultured reader' thinks that by using quotations from Metabus and Camilla, "the poetess

14 Kyriakidis 1992, 142.

15 Kyriakidis 1992, 143.

aims [...] at uncoupling Mary from feminine characteristics" and "suggesting an indirect male presentation by a process of association."[16] His final conclusion is that Proba, in her representations of Eve and Mary, makes her "view of the female sex abundantly clear" and he is convinced that "scholarship is able to bring to the surface the thoughts and perceptions of the poetess on Woman and her nature."[17]

To my mind, this reading forces the *Cento* into a predetermined moralist paradigm that finds little support in the text. Any quest to establish universal statements about the nature of "Woman" will be undermined by Mary's hypotextual transformations through Venus, Dido and Eve, goddesses, prophets and kings. A leading reminiscence that stands out is Virgil's story about Metabus and Camilla: a child that will sacrifice herself for her people and a parent that has to be taken as both mother and father. Hence, already in Virgil, heroic and parental virtues are effectively degendered and Proba taps into this aspect of the epic to represent the virgin birth of Jesus. Proba thereby places Mary in a pattern of gender transgression that is found in several Roman myths,[18] and in early Christian literature, where this phenomenon was rather frequent.[19] In the Gospel of Thomas, Jesus says that he will make Mary male, "for every woman who makes herself male will enter the kingdom of heaven" (Saying 114), and Thecla dresses like a man to follow Paul in the Acts of Paul and Thecla. In her fourth dream vision, the narrator of the *Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas* declares that she became a man when she was preparing to fight Satan appearing to her in the shape of an Egyptian:

> Veniunt et ad me adolescentes decori, adiutores et fautores mei. Et expoliata sum, et facta sum masculus, et coeperunt me favisores mei oleo defricare, quomodo solent in agone; et illum contra Egyptium video in afa volutantem.
>
> Handsome young men came to me as my helpers and supporters. And I was stripped naked, and I became a man. And my supporters began to rub me with oil, as they are accustomed to do for a match. And I saw that Egyptian on the other side rolling in the dust.
>
> *The Passion of Perpetua and Felicity* 10.6–7, ed. and transl. HEFFERNAN 2012, 112 and 130

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16 Kyriakidis 1992, 144.

17 Kyriakidis 1992, 149, 152.

18 Williams 2012, 69–75.

19 Cox Miller 2005, 87–88, n. 6 and 7.

As Perpetua "became a man" in the critical moment of battle, Mary shifts between male and female guises, and Christ is unstably represented through male and female Virgilian characters.

The Teachings of Proba's Christ

The order of events in the New Testament narrative and the teachings of Christ diverges from the biblical narratives in several aspects. At first Christ resists the temptations of the devil (429–455 ≈ Matt. 4:1–11; Luke 4:1–13), thus gaining the trust and admiration of the people (455–464 ≈ Matt. 4:23/25; Mark 3:7–8; Luke 6:17). After attracting this audience he spreads his teachings, first in the Sermon on the Mount (467–504 ≈ Matt. 5–7), and then through his encounter with the rich young man (505–530 ≈ Matt. 19:16–22; Mark 10:17–22; Luke 18:18–25). Once his doctrine has been established he undertakes his holy deeds (pp. 176–83). In these parts of the narrative, in which Christian ethics are conveyed, it is particularly interesting to note how figures and events of Roman mythology present themselves as good and bad examples to learn from and overcome. A conspicuous example is when Satan challenges Jesus to prove that he is the son of God using a verse that describes the lethal adventures of Daidalos: "daring to entrust yourself to the sky" (*ausus te credere caelo*, 444 ~ *A* 6.15). By putting these words in the mouth of the audacious serpent, the hybris represented in this myth is firmly refuted. Futher on during their encounter, Christ is represented by Aeneas and the devil by Turnus as the heroes feature in their final and decisive battle: "What you see is true. Pray that you might fly with wings | up to the high stars or hide under the hollow earth" (*opta ardua pinnis* | *astra sequi clausumque cava te condere terra*, 449–450 ~ *A* 12.892 and 12.893). In this hypertextual arrangement, Aeneas' revenge on Turnus is incorporated into Christ's confident reply to the serpent. This ties in with the parallelism between Christ's founding of a new spiritual empire and Aeneas' founding of the Roman Empire. This begins in the Old Testament narrative, where the life of human beings after the Fall is compared to the Iron Age, the period of final decline in the Greco-Roman myth about the ages of man:

deterior donec paulatim ac decolor aetas, *A* 8.326
ferrea progenies, duris caput extulit arvis *G* 2.341
et belli rabies et amor successit habendi. *A* 8.327

> Then gradually the age turned weaker and paler | a race of iron held up its head above the hard earth, | and madness of war and the desire for ownership followed.
>
> *Cento* 299–301

The passage in the *Aeneid* where Evander tells Aeneas about the origin of Latium (*A* 8.314–336), and more specifically of how Latium became worse after the disappearance of its first ruler Saturn, correspons to the end of the Golden Age.[20] In Proba's representation of the Sermon on the Mount, Christ thus advises the crowds on how to return to the heavenly empire again. The sermon is divided into three parts beginning with rules that must be observed by those who wish to attain salvation (469–474). This is followed by a threatful speech on the sufferings that wait in Hell for the sinners (475–487) and finally a prohibition of the celebration the pagan feasts (488–494), the last element being a marked addition to the episode as narrated by Matthew.[21] Just as the Trojans founded Rome and created new rites, the text suggests that the Romans must now build a Christian one and replace the old rites with new ones. As Margoni-Kögler puts it, "the *Aeneid*'s tension between old and new homeland becomes that between Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained; Aeneas founding of the Roman state which should be an empire of peace and social order is paralleled to Christ's mission of establishing the kingdom of God, a realm of peace".[22]

The Sermon is introduced by the verse that opens the Cumaean Sibyl's description of the punishments that unrighteous souls go through in the underworld, and several more inversions of this speech follow (cf. Matt. 5:3–12):

discite iustitiam moniti, ¦ succurrite fessis	*A* 6.620 ¦ 11.335
pro se quisque, viri, ¦ quae cuique est copia, laeti	*A* 5.501 ¦ 5.100
communemque vocate deum. ¦ meliora sequamur	*A* 8.275 ¦ 3.188
quoque vocat vertamus iter. ¦ via prima salutis	*A* 5.23 ¦ 6.96
intemerata fides ¦ et mens sibi conscia recti.	*A* 2.143 ¦ 1.604
vobis parta quies ¦ perfecto temporis orbe.	*A* 3.495 ¦ 6.745

20 Cf. Pomponius centonizing the same verses as Proba in a similar context in *Versus ad gratiam Domini* 108–109, (Schenkl 16 1888, 614); Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 3.10.14; Lactantius, *Divinae Institutiones* 5.6.12; cf. Courcelle 1984, 585, n. 104 and 105.

21 Cf. Sineri 2011, 244.

22 Margoni-Kögler 2001, 128.

> Take warning and learn justice! May each one of you for his part, | men, gladly come to the rescue of the exhausted according to your capacity, | and call on our common God. Let us follow what is better | and turn our path wherever he orders. The first road to salvation | is unblemished faith and a mind that knows what is right. | When the great circle of time is completed, rest awaits you.
>
> *Cento* 469–474

The Sibyl's oracle about the Trojan's "first road to salvation" (*via prima salutis*, 472 ~ *A* 6.96) becomes the "road to salvation" of the Christians, and verses referring to the journey of the Trojans are similarly used in verses 470 and 472. There are also connections to Anchises' speech in the underworld: the phrase "When the great circle of time is completed" (*perfecto temporis orbe*), derives from his description of the transmigration of the souls (*Cento* 474 ~ *A* 6.745). Since the same verse is recycled at the end of Christ's birth (380), an internal typology is established between the birth of Christ and the future of righteous Christians. But the reference to the cosmic cycle of the soul also leads up to the next part of the sermon: an extended description of Hell (*Cento* 495–504 ≈ Matt. 13:50; Mark 9:48) that ends in a warning of the apocalypse (495–504 ≈ cf. Matt. 24:29–31; Mark 13:24–27; Luke 21:25–28). This section has been called the first account of Inferno in Christian poetry,[23] and it illustrates the retained interest in the pagan underworld that prevailed among early Christians.[24] In the *Cento*, it is allotted a special position, presented as the antitype to the Old Testament Flood scene—God's punishment and destruction of the life on earth.[25] This structure is indicated by the similar wording in the descriptions of the events that lead up to the Flood and the crimes of the punished. Greed was one of the causes of the Flood (cf. *Gen.* 6:5):

> condit opes alius defossoque incubat auro — *G* 2.507
> nec doluit miserans inopem ¦ dextramque tetendit — *G* 2.499 ¦ *A* 10.823
>
> Others collected treasures and riches and brooded their hidden gold. | They did not take pity on the poor, they did not extend their right hand.
>
> *Cento* 305–306

This is echoed in Christ's warning to his assembly (cf. Matt. 6:19–21, 24):

23 Herzog 1975, 25.

24 Opelt 1964, 112.

25 Clark and Hatch 1981, 166–167.

nam qui divitiis soli incubuere repertis	*A* 6.610
nec partem posuere suis, ¦ dum vita maneret	*A* 6.611 ¦ 6.608

For those who alone brooded the riches they had found | and did not share them with friends while still alive

Cento 475–476

In both passages, Virgilian *loci* that express the same morality about greed are re-used: the *Genesis* narrative recycles examples from a list of men with hubristic ambitions (*Cento* 305–306 ~ *G* 2.507 and 2.499), and for the Gospel section Proba re-uses verses from the episode in the *Aeneid* where people are punished in Hades for such sins. This correspondence in the Virgilian opus is exploited in order to establish a clear parallelism in the *Cento* between the Old and New Testament narratives. The account of Hades is throughout the leading reminiscence in the subsequent description of Hell:

tum, cum frigida mors anima seduxerit artus,	*A* 4.385
inclusi poenam expectant, ¦ quae maxima turba est,	*A* 6.614 ¦ 6.611
infernisque cient tenebris ¦ veterumque malorum	*A* 7.325 ¦ 6.739
supplicia expendunt. ¦ aliis sub gurgite vasto	*A* 6.740 ¦ 6.741
infectum eluitur scelus aut exuritur igni.	*A* 6.742
turbidus hic caeno vastaque voragine gurges	*A* 6.296
aestuat atque ¦ imo barathri ¦ eructat harenam.	*A* 6.297 ¦ 3.421 ¦ 6.297
hinc exaudiri gemitus et saeva sonare	*A* 6.557
verbera, tum stridor ferri tractaeque catenae,	*A* 6.558
semper et obducta densantur nocte tenebrae.	*G* 1.248

these will, after cold death have parted their limbs from the soul, | be imprisoned and face punishment, and this is the larger crowd. | They will call out in the shadows below, and pay the price | for their previous crimes. For some their unfulfilled sin | will be washed away in a huge vortex, or burned by fire. | This whirlpool is thick with clay and boils in a huge chasm | and casts up sand from the depths. | From here you hear the sound of lamentation and cruel | beatings, shrieking iron and dragging of chains, | and the shadows are always made thick by the widespread night.

Cento 478–487

Semi-biblical typological links between Christ on the one hand and the Sibyl of Cumae and Anchises on the other are once again affirmed, as their accounts of the underworld are heavily re-used here (*Cento* 475–487 ~ verses from *A* 6.608–

627 and 6.724–751), reinforcing the prophetic powers of Christ. The pagan myth of death and reincarnation is thus transferred to the Christian underworld, where the souls suffer eternal damnation. This difference yet similarity is defined by Herzog as a *Kontrastimitation*, a term describing the sort of literary re-use where phrases are appropriated to express an opposite phenomenon, thereby calling attention to the difference between the two contexts.[26] Thereby, he argues, the Virgilian scene is 'neutralized' to fit into the new Christian context.[27] Yet, this 'neutralization' does not neccesarily entail oblivion of the original context but rather it highlights differences as well as similarities between the pagan and Christian cultural spheres.

After the description of these torments, Christ instructs his followers to give up their ancient religious rites (which is not found in the Gospels):

praeterea ¦ quae dicam animis advertite vestris.	*A* 1.49 etc. ¦ *A* 2.712
non ego vos posthac ¦ caesis de more iuvencis	*E* 1.75 ¦ *A* 3.369
religione patrum ¦ truncis et robore natas	*A* 2.715/8.598 ¦ 8.315
mortalive manu ¦ effigies et templa tueri	*A* 9.95 ¦ 7.443
audiam: et haec ¦ repetens iterumque iterumque monebo:	*A* 4.387 ¦ 3.436
sed periisse semel satis est, ¦ natumque patremque	*A* 9.140 ¦ 4.605
profuerit meminisse magis, ¦ si credere dignum est.	*G* 1.451 ¦ *A* 6.173

Moreover, listen with your hearts to what I will say now. | Let me no more hear that you, with young bulls slaughtered | in accordance with your ancestral rites, observe images, | born from trees and oak or carved by mortal hand, and temples. | Time and time again, I will repeat this call. | But perishing once is enough; it will have been of greater use | to remember the Son and the Father, if it is worthy to believe it.

Cento 488–494

Christ's prohibition of idol worship and the Greco-Roman tradition of bullsacrifice have no equivalent in the Gospels. His claim that "perishing once is enough" could, however, in this context of animal sacrifice, be related to the sacrifice of Christ. In contemporary biblical exegesis sacrifice (above all that of Isaac) tended to be regarded as a prefiguration of the events at Golgata.[28] By amalga-

26 For definition of Kontrastimitation see Thraede 1962, 1039; cf. Green 2006, 59.

27 Cf. Herzog 1975, 25–26; cf. Bažil 2009, 170.

28 Kelly 1958, 73.

mating this with an actual prohibition of the old rites of the Romans, the call for new rites of veneration is emphasized.

Christ's attitude towards Roman traditions and wealth continues in the much-disputed passage where he advises the rich young man (*Cento* 505–530 ≈ Matt. 19:16–22; Mark 10:17–22; Luke 18:18–23):

o praestans animi iuvenis, ¦ absiste precando,	*A* 12.19 ¦ 8.403
nec te paeniteat: ¦ nihil o tibi amice relictum.	*E* 10.17 ¦ *A* 6.509
hoc etiam his addam, tua si mihi certa voluntas:	*A* 7.548
disce, puer, ¦ contemnere opes et te quoque dignum	*A* 12.435 ¦ 8.364
finge deo, ¦ et quae sit poteris cognoscere virtus.	*A* 8.365 ¦ *E* 4.27
da dextram misero et ¦ fratrem ne desere frater.	*A* 6.370 ¦ 10.600
si iungi hospitio properat, ¦ coniunge volentem.	*A* 7.264 ¦ 5.712
casta pudicitiam servet domus. ¦ en age segnes	*G* 2.524 ¦ 3.42
rumpe moras ¦ rebusque veni non asper egenis.	*G* 3.43 ¦ *A* 8.365

O outstandingly brave young man, give up your pleading. | Do not let it grieve you. You have overlooked nothing, my friend. | To this I would add, if your will for me is certain: | Boy, learn to despise riches, and make yourself worthy | of God; and then you will be able to understand what virtue is. | Reach out your hand to the unfortunate, a brother should not forsake | a brother. Accept him if he wants to be your guest-friend. | A chaste home should honor modesty. Now, break your lingering | delays and meet those who are in need without harshness.

Cento 519–527

Because of Proba's social status as an aristocratic Roman *mater familias*, scholars have stressed the fact that Christ's recommendations lie "much closer to the old Roman values of a frugal warrior aristocracy than to the ascetic traditions built on Matthew's story"; that "it is striking that Jesus does not tell him to 'go, sell all you have, and give it to the poor' ".[29] Some even call this part of the narrative "strange".[30] Such perceived discontinuities could be explained by pointing to other contemporary rather lenient interpretations of Christ's renunciation of wealth among early Roman Christians.[31] In a sense, it is not at all striking that Christ does not say: 'go, sell all you have, and give it to the poor', since this

29 Quotation from Cooper 2007, 66. Cf. Clark and Hatch 1981, 120; Curran 2000, 284; Margoni-Kögler 2001, 136–137; Kaczynski 2002, 132; Hunter 2007, 70–71; Badini and Rizzi 2011, 67–68.

30 Sandnes 2011, 171.

31 On this topic, see e. g. Trout 1999, 133–145; Laniado 2009, 17–18.

would inevitably mean stepping out of the Virgilian opus that defines Proba's language. To say: *disce contemnere opes* is close enough, and there are similar appropriations of this passage.[32]

A leading reminiscence here is the episode when Evander asks Aeneas not to despise his simple home (*Cento* 522–523 ~ *A* 8.364–65).[33] The connection between this scene and the humble life of Christians has previously been hinted at in the description of Christ's birth (*Cento* 375 ~ *A* 8.366). Hence, a semi-biblical typology is established where the Arcadians' simple way of life prefigures the expected life-style of the Roman Christians. Just as the Trojans mixed with the Arcadians according to the Roman foundation myth, so must the rich young man adapt the Christian humble life-style. Peter Brown thus interprets this section as Christ encouraging the Rich Young Man to return to the Golden Age.[34]

It is astounding that the rich young man is presented as "blossoming in endeavors of ignoble leisure" (*studiis florens ignobilis oti*, *Cento* 507 ~ *G* 4.564), words that, in the hypotext, belong to none other than Virgil himself:

> Haec super arvorum cultu pecorumque canebam [...]
> illo Vergilium me tempore dulcis alebat
> Parthenope studiis florentem ignobilis oti,
> carmina qui lusi pastorum audaxque iuventa,
> Tityre, te patulae cecini sub tegmine fagi.
>
> So much I sang in addition to the care of fields, of cattle and of trees [...] In those days I, Virgil, was nursed by sweet Parthenope, and rejoiced in the arts of inglorious ease—I who toyed with shepherds' songs, and, in youth's boldness, sang of you, Tityrus, under the canopy of a spreading beech.
>
> *Georgica* 4.559 and 563–566, transl. FAIRCLOUGH 1999 [1916], 259

By evoking this rare explicitly metapoetic statement, Proba is able to stage a dialogue between Virgil as the epitome of Roman pagan culture and the new

32 Cf. ps.-Damasus, *Epigram* 67.5 (Ferrua 1942, 240); cf. Courcelle 1984, 589, n. 125.

33 Cf. Clark and Hatch 1981, 121.

34 Brown 2012, 313: "Faltonia Betitia Proba went on to describe the call of Christ to the Rich Young Man as a call to regain the Golden Age. [...] the spoiled richling was challenged to step back into the Golden Age. Proba did not present him as having been urged by Christ to become poor. Rather, he was told by Christ (in a series of echoes of Vergil) to behave like an aristocrat of a gentler age, when Good King Saturn had ruled in Italy."

religion. This dialogue is further highlighted by the fact that Virgil's words addressed to Maecenas "rightfully the greatest part of our reputation" (*famae merito pars maxima nostrae*, 512 ~ *G* 2.40) are pronounced by the rich young man when he addresses Christ in the *Cento*:

o decus, o famae merito pars maxima nostrae,	*G* 2.40
ad te confugio et supplex tua numina posco.	*A* 1.666
omnia praecepi atque animo mecum ante peregi.	*A* 6.105
eripe me his, invicte, malis. ¦ quid denique restat,	*A* 6.365 ¦ 2.70
quidve sequens tantos possim superare labores?	*A* 3.368
accipe daque fidem: ¦ mihi iussa capessere fas est.	*A* 8.150 ¦ 8.1.77

O Glory, rightfully the greatest part of our reputation. | I take refuge to you, and humbly beseech your divinity. | I have already seen and experienced everything in my thoughts. | Release me from these evils, you undefeated. For what remains, | or how can I overcome the difficult hardships that await? | Take my word and give me yours: It's for me to carry out the order.

Cento 512–517

Rather than asking, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" (Matt. 19:16; cf. Mark 10:17; Luke 18:18), the rich young man expresses a longing after Christ with words that Venus addresses to Cupid: "I take refuge to you, and humbly beseech your divinity." As in other passages of the *Cento*, Christ is represented with verses belonging to Cupid, and in this particular case, the rich young man's longing for Christ is represented by the erotic desire represented in Virgil. This harkens back to Proba's basic mission: to "declare that Virgil sang about the pious feats of Christ" (23). Next, the rich young man utters the same words as Aeneas addressed to the Sibyl after her prophecy of the future empire: "I have already seen and experienced everything in my thoughts." In this way, the *Cento* calls attention to the Sibyl's key-role in Virgil's status as a *christianus sine Christo* and to the frequent equation between the Roman Empire and Christianity. But Christ's answer that he must despise riches turns out to be too much to ask for:

ille ¦ in verbo vestigia torsit	*A* 6.408 etc. ¦ 6.547
tristior, ¦ ora modis adtollens pallida miris,	*A* 1.228 / *G* 4.235 ¦ *A* 1.354
multa gemens, ¦ seque ex oculis avertit et aufert.	*A* 12.886 ¦ 4.389

> the boy turned his steps while his voice was still speaking | and became gloomier. His face turned strangely pale | and under heavy lament, he turned away and withdrew from their sight.
>
> *Cento* 528–530

Through solemn Virgilian moments (Aeneas and Deiphobus, Dido and Sychaeus, Juturna cursing her immortality, Aeneas and Dido), the scene ends quite tragically and without any reconciliation, just as in the Gospels (Matt. 19:22; Mark 10:22; Luke 18:23). If we were to continue the metapoetic reading of the rich young man as standing in for Virgil, this would be the only moment of anxiety about the Roman poet's relationship to Christianity in the *Cento*. In the end, Virgil cannot let go of his riches and is thus unable to fully form part of the new religion.

Christ's Heroic Deeds

Many of Christ's miracles are not mentioned in the *Cento*.[35] What we find is an extensive amalgamation of three biblical episodes (531–561): Christ calming the tempest at sea (Matt. 8:23–27; Mark 4:35–41; Luke 8:22–25), walking on water (Matt. 14:22–33; Mark 6:45–51; John 6:16–21) and calling his first disciples (Matt. 4:18–22; Luke 5:1–11).

The episode begins with a group of companions (*socii*) that set out at sea and are suddenly caught in a terrible and deadly storm (*Cento* 531–544). The leading reminiscence here is the tempest of the first book of the *Aeneid* (*Cento* 536–538; 542–543; 545–546 ~ verses from *A* 1.81–222).[36] Next, Christ's intervention is described (cf. Matt. 14:24–25; Mark 6:48; John 6:18–19):

ecce deus ¦ magno misceri murmure pontum	*A* 5.854 ¦ 1.124
emissamque hiemem sensit, ¦ cui summa potestas.	*A* 1.125 ¦ 10.100
par levibus ventis ¦ et fulminis ocior alis	*A* 6.702 ¦ 5.319
prona petit maria et pelago decurrit aperto:	*A* 5.212
nec longo distat cursu ¦ praeeunte carina.	*A* 3.116 ¦ 5.186

> Behold! God noticed that the sea had been mixed with a great noise | and that the storm had broken loose—he who has the highest power. | Like

35 Cf. Clark and Hatch 1981, 125.

36 Herzog 1975, 16–17; Courcelle 1984, 44; Bažil 2009, 173–175.

> light winds and faster than lightning he flew out towards | the steep waters and ran over the open sea. | He was not far from the moving keel.
>
> *Cento* 545–549

The disciples immediately recognize and salute Christ, completely differing from the Gospels, where they believe him to be a ghost and take flight (Matt. 14:26; Mark 6:49–50; John 6:19). We may also feel that there are striking contrasts with the Virgilian hypotext: Christ "touched the deep waves and came out on the water" (*altos tetigit fluctus et ad aequora venit*, 552 ~ *A* 3.662) like Polyphemus following Aeneas' ship. It has been noted that this choice of verse entails a 'neutralization' of the original context;[37] however, as Pollmann suggests, it presents Christ as a powerful and immense being.[38] He is similarly set apart from his disciples through the hypotext when the ship groans under his weight like Charon's boat under the weight of Aeneas' human body. Like a giant among men or a mortal among hapless souls, Christ is of a different and more powerful nature.

Another example of typological connections with potential impious connotations is found when Christ is immediately acknowledged as the helmsman of the boat, like the Trojan soldier Gyas after furiously throwing Menoetes overboard (*Cento* 557 ~ *A* 5.188). Some have found this re-use disturbing but as is the case with the previous examples, we could also say that it contributes to a characterization of Christ as powerful and efficacious.[39] Typologically, it also encapsulates a progression from bad pagan types and good Christian antitype. Another such change is found in that the *deus* that manifests itself to the sailors at the beginning of this passage is the god of sleep Somnus in Virgil, who shakes a stick dipped in the river of oblivion over Palinurus, the helmsman of Aeneas' ship. As a negative non-biblical type, the pagan god Somnus and his deceitful actions towards Palinurus are reversed by the biblical antitype: Christ. The *deus* that "seated himself in the high stern" (*puppique deus consedit in alta*, 560 ~ *A* 5.841) also has its Virgilian source in the god Somnus. This consistency reinforces the allusion to this specific episode in the *Aeneid*, according to which Christ reverses the mistake committed by Somnus.

A similar typological strategy is integrated in the episode where Jesus rides into a city (Jerusalem) on a donkey, and the inhabitants lay out their clothes on the road (cf. Matt. 21:7–11; Mark 11:7–10; Luke 19:35–38; John 12:13–15):

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37 Cf. Herzog 1975, 38.

38 Pollmann 2004, 90.

39 Pollmann 2004, 90.

Tunc etiam ¦ tardi costas agitator aselli — *A* 2.246 ¦ *G* 1.273
insedit nimbo effulgens: ¦ cui plurima circum — *A* 2.616 ¦ 5.250
matres atque viri, | pueri ¦ velamina nota
G 4.475/ *A* 6.306 ¦ *G* 4.476/ *A* 6.307 ¦ *A* 6.221
subiciunt ¦ funemque manu contingere gaudent — *A* 2.236 etc. ¦ 2.239

At this time, he came mounted on a slow donkey's back, | flowing with radiance. All around him | were mothers, men and children who laid a great many | of their favorite garments below him and rejoiced in in touching the ropes.

Cento 562–565

In the Virgilian hypotext, it is Minerva who arrived "flowing with radiance". Thus, a semi-biblical typology is established in which Minerva's wisdom foreshadows that of Christ. The crowds represent the souls that emerge from Hades when Orpheus plays on his lyre. This verse is also used at the end of the proem to the Old Testament (55, p. 132). In this way, a three-level typological pattern is created: the dead souls of Hades listening to Orpheus' lyre foreshadow the centonic narrator's audience, which is in turn connected to the crowds that salute Christ when entering Jerusalem. A negative type is found in the first hemistich and in the last verse which derive from Aeneas' words to Dido about Cassandra's prophecy of the Trojan horse. On the one hand, it marks a typological progression from bad to good, as in the earlier examples of Polyphemus and Gyas; yet, on the other hand, it foreshadows the immanent disaster and enmity between Christ and the crowds. Interestingly, Paulinus of Nola also uses this verse when describing the procession of the relics of Saint Felix.[40] In both cases, the image of the Trojan horse connotes monumentality and power.

The event where Christ drives the vendors out of the temple (Matt. 21:12–13; Mark 11:15–18; Luke 19:45–46) is extensively amplified:

iamque propinquabant portis ¦ templumque vetustum — *A* 11.621 ¦ 2.713
antiqua e cedro ¦ centum sublime columnis — *A* 7.178 ¦ 7.170
ingreditur ¦ magna medius comitante caterva. — *A* 6.157 ¦ 5.76
horrendum silvis ¦ hoc illis curia templum, — *A* 7.172 ¦ 7.174
hae sacrae sedes, ¦ miro quod honore colebant. — *A* 7.175 ¦ 4.458

40 Paul. Nol. *Carm.* 18.125 (de Hartel 1894, 102): *Quisque alium praestans proprior consistere certat* | *reliquiis corpusque manu contingere gaudet*; cf. Courcelle 1984, 166, n. 146.

namque sub ingenti lustrat dum singula templo, *A* 1.453
horrescit visu subito ¦ insonuitque flagello *A* 6.710 ¦ 5.579
significatque manu et magno simul ¦ intonat ore: *A* 12.692 | 6.607
"quae scelerum facies, ¦ quaeve | aera micantia cerno *A* 6.560 ¦ 1.539 ¦ 2.734
Caesaris et nomen? ¦ quae mentem insania mutat? *G* 3.47 ¦ *A* 4.595/12.37
hae nobis propriae sedes, ¦ hic ¦ tempore certo *A* 3.167 ¦ *G* 2.4 etc. ¦ 4.100
perpetuis soliti patrum considere mensis." *A* 7.176
obstipuere animis gelidusque per ima cucurrit *A* 2.120
ossa tremor, ¦ mensasque metu liquere priores. *A* 2.121 ¦ 3.213

Now they were approaching the gates and an ancient temple | made of age-old cedar, lofty with a hundred columns. | He entered it, accompanied by a large crowd. | Terrifying amidst forests this was their temple and assembly, | their sacred house, which were revered with incredible reverence. | But when he inspected every part of the massive temple, | he was horrified by a sudden sight and his whip resounded. | He pointed with his hand and shouted with his great voice: | "What is this sight of crimes? What gleaming bronze do I see | and Caesar's name? What madness has perverted your minds? | This is my own home. Here, at a certain time | they would sit at the communal tables of the fathers." | They were astonished in their spirits and chilling terror ran through | their innermost bones, and the foremen left their tables in fear.

Cento 566–579

Clark and Hatch refer to this passage as calling to mind Aeneas' warrior spirit since there is "no note of forgiveness, only one of revenge".[41] Indeed, the *Cento* adds drama and violence by providing Christ with a whip and loud voice, but the fury is certainly present in the Gospels of Mark and Matthew as well. As for the temple building, the leading reminiscence is king Latinus' palace on the Laurentine Hill (*A* 7.170–182). A feeling of monumentality and wealth is evoked through the "hundred columns" of his royal palace,[42] and is further underlined in the references to the Temple of Ceres (*Cento* 566 ~ *A* 2.713). The holiness of

41 Clark and Hatch 1981[2], 34.

42 Cf. *De Ecclesia* (Schenkl 1888, 621) where this verse is used to describe a Christian Church; cf. Courcelle 1984, 532, n. 53.

the place is stressed in the second hemistich of the following verse, originally describing Aeneas on the way to his father's grave (*Cento* 568 ~ *A* 5.76).

Just as elaborate are the re-uses in the narration of Christ's last supper with the disciples (*Cento* 580–599 ≈ Matt. 26:20–29; Mark 14:17–25; Luke 22:14–38; John 13:1–32), where numerous verses related to Roman feasts and rites in the *Aeneid* are taken over. The expression describing the sacred rite itself (*ritus sacrorum*) echoes Jove's promise to Juno to give the Trojans new rites (*Cento* 587 ~ *A* 12.836). At the end of the epic, the goddess accepts the new Trojan kingdom on the condition that they adopt new rites honouring her. Just as the transition from Troy to Italy called for new rites, so does the transition from paganism to Christianity. This theme is developed when we are told that Christ "initiate the celebrations of his father" (*genitori instaurat honores*, 584 ~ *A* 5.94), as Aeneas did for Anchises. We also find it when the act of handing out bread is described with words originally denoting the sacrificial salted flour in connection with Aeneas' treaty with Latinus on the future Empire (*Cento* 586 ~ *A* 12.173). In the same way, Christ's sacrifice will lead to a new spiritual empire. However, another scene that is repeatedly re-used is that of Dido's banquet for Aeneas and his shipwrecked companions (*Cento* 583 and 587 ~ *A* 1.723 and 729), hypotextually foreshadowing the immanent betrayal of one of the banqueters. As in the Bible, Christ openly predicts this (Matt. 26:23; Mark 14:20; Luke 22:21; John 13:26) and his own sacrifice:

"unum pro multis dabitur caput." ¦ haec ita fatus *A* 5.815 ¦ 10.594
conticuit ¦ seramque dedit per membra quietem. *A* 6.54 ¦ 8.30

"A single head will be given for many". After having spoken thus, | he fell silent and at last let rest come to the limbs.

Cento 598–599

In Virgil, this prophecy is uttered by Neptune, who promises Venus that the Trojans will arrive safely in Italy, but that one crew member must die, which turns out to refer to Palinurus. This hypotextual 'sacrifice', which made the Roman Empire possible, thus becomes analogous to Christ's sacrifice.[43]

In a brief dramatic scene, Christ is arrested (*Cento* 600–612 ≈ Matt. 26:57 and 27:2; Mark 14:46 and 15:1; Luke 22:54 and 23:1; John 18:12 and 28). In the representation of how the crowd handles Christ, Poinsotte claims that Proba's main intention was to show the "spiritual degeneration" of the Jews and to

43 Cf. Clark and Hatch 1981, 134–135; Badini and Rizzi 2011, 198.

exculpate the Romans. Such anti-semitic sentiments were not unusual among early Christians,[44] but we should pay close attention to what is happening on the hypotextual level: to represent the aggressors, Proba uses priests that celebrate the rite of Hercules (*Cento* 601 ~ *A* 8.281), members of the Roman senate as depicted on Aeneas' shield (*Cento* 602 ~ *A* 8.679), and a rioting mob (*Cento* 606 ~ *A* 1.149). We could argue that this is another instance where the *Cento* romanizes the evangelical narrative,[45] presenting us with a "monument of Christian selfhood constructed out of the spolia of Jews and pagans."[46]

Then a new day dawns, the day when the crucifixion takes place (*Cento* 613–624 ≈ Matt. 27:27–49; Mark 15:16–36; Luke 23:26–45; John 19:16–18). It begins with a crowd of people arresting Jesus:

tollitur in caelum clamor cunctique ¦ repente *A* 11.745 ¦ 12.462 etc.
corripuere sacram effigiem manibusque cruentis *A* 2.167
ingentem quercum decisis undique ramis *A* 11.5
constituunt ¦ spirisque ligant ingentibus ¦ ipsum, *A* 6.217 ¦ 2.217 ¦ 2.190 etc.
tendebantque manus ¦ pedibus per mutua nexis— *A* 6.314 ¦ 7.66
triste ministerium—, ¦ sequitur quos cetera pubes, *A* 6.223 ¦ 5.74
ausi omnes inmane nefas ausoque potiti. *A* 6.624
ille autem inpavidus ¦ "quo vincula nectitis?" inquit. *A* 10.717 ¦ *E* 6.23

They raised their cry to the skies and suddenly everyone | seized the holy figure. With their bloody hands | they put up a large oak tree with cut branches, | tied him with huge twisted bands, | and stretched out his hands and pressed his feet together |—a terrible undertaking—and the other young men followed them. | All dared an atracious sin and enjoyed what they dared. | But fearless he said: "Why do you fasten bonds?"

Cento 614–621

Hypotextually, this section is dominated by verses relating to warfare: The beginning of the first verse describes the final battle between the Rutulians and the Trojans (*Cento* 614 ~ *A* 12.462) and the entire second verse is excerpted from the sack of Troy (*Cento* 615 ~ *A* 2.167), where the "holy figure" (*sacra effigies*) represents the holy statue of Athena, which was stolen from her temple. Some

44 Poinsotte 1986, 90–92; cf. Deproost 2000, 59; Santorelli 2006, 485–493; Sineri 2011, 271.
45 Cf. Stella 2006, 37.
46 Cf. Jacobs 2006, 99.

scholars have argued that *effigies* applies to the cross in the *Cento*,[47] others interpret it as referring to the body of Christ.[48] Following this interpretation, the sacredness of the statue of Athena—goddess of wisdom—again becomes a prefiguration of Christ. Cacioli argues that Proba in this way suggests that although the soldiers captured the body of Christ, his true and real essence is not within reach for man.[49]

Next, the crowd raises an oak tree. In this way, the biblical cross is connected to the episode where Aeneas raises a tree of this sort in honour of fallen soldiers (*Cento* 616 ~ *A* 11.5). This symbol synthesizes Jewish, Roman and Christian religious codes: the oak-tree had a sacred status in Greco-Roman religion through its association with Jove and in the Hebew Bible where Abraham built an altar to God by the oak of Mamre (*Gen.* 13:18 and 18:1).[50] Subsequently, they tie Christ to the tree "with huge twisted bands" (*spirisque ligant ingentibus*, 617), originally describing the snakes that asphyxiate Laocoön and his sons after he warns the Trojans not to bring the wooden horse within the city walls (*A* 2.217). This activates one of the most pervasive biblical and semi-biblical typologies in the *Cento*: The crucifixion represents the revengeful return of the serpent that lured Adam and Eve but was defeated by Christ (p. 151–52). We may also see a connection to the allusion in the Gospel of John to Moses' snake of bronze as a prefiguration of the crucifixion (John 3:14). Moreover, we could stress the fact that the serpents silenced the prophet Laocoön and stopped him from revealing the purpose of the wooden horse to the Trojans. Similarly, when Christ is crucified, it is in his capacity as prophet of the future and eternal life that he is obstructed.

Some have argued that the function of this 'personification' of the cross is to present it as the actual killer of Christ and to shift the blame from the Roman soldiers,[51] but the crowd is undeniably presented as cruel and responsible for the deed. Through the hypotext, their sinfulness is reinforced with a verse referring to the condemned souls in Tartarus: "All dared an atracious sin and enjoyed what they dared." (*Cento* 620 ~ *A* 6.624). In this way, they are also connected to the sinners condemned by Christ in his Sermon earlier in the text (pp. 168–72).

After this, Christ begins to scold the crowds:

47 Clark and Hatch 1981, 192, n. 54.

48 Meconi 2004, 118; Sandnes 2011, 157.

49 Cacioli 1969, 226; cf. also Badini and Rizzi 2011, 200.

50 Cf. Badini and Rizzi 2011, 200–201.

51 Meconi 2004, 118–119; Sandnes 2011, 157.

tantane vos generis tenuit fiducia vestri? *A* 1.132
post mihi non simili poena commissa luetis. *A* 1.136

Has so much confidence in your race gotten hold of you? | Later you will atone your deeds with a punishment unlike mine.
Cento 622–623

This scene has attracted some negative attention.[52] Ilona Opelt criticizes Proba's representation of Christ because he is not a loving God, but an angry and vengeful one, calling the scene scandalous.[53] The narrator's promise of peace seems forgotten. Perhaps it is not uncommon that people fail to see a contradiction between warfare and their religion's message of peace, but it is also comprehensible from a hypertextual perspective. In Virgil, the speaker is Neptune, who rebukes the winds Euros and Zephyrus for stirring up a storm against the Trojans, following the order of Juno. Thus, the people is equated with the fickle winds, who have followed the order of Juno via Aeolus but are now admonished by a divine being with greater authority.

Resurrection and Ascension

The crucifixion is followed by a description of nature's reaction to these events (*Cento* 625–637 ≈ Matt. 27:51; Mark 15:38, Luke 23:44–45): Earth trembles and "incorporeal shadows" (*umbrae tenues*, 632 ~ *G* 4.472) arise from Erebos, suggesting that the border between earth and underworld is dissolving. Proteus' description of the dead souls flocking around Orpheus when he sings in the underworld is a leading reminiscence in this passage (cf. Matt. 27:52–53):

extemplo ¦ commotae Erebi de sedibus imis *A* 1.92 ¦ *G* 4.471
umbrae ibant tenues. ¦ tellus quoque et aequora ponti *G* 4.472 ¦ 1.469
signa dabant: ¦ sistunt amnes terraeque dehiscunt. *G* 1.471 ¦ 1.479
quin ipsae stupuere domus atque intima Leti *G* 4.481
Tartara ¦ et umbrosae penitus patuere cavernae. *G* 4.482 ¦ *A* 8.242

Suddenly, from the nether reach of Erebos, | incorporeal shadows came up. And earth and the waters of the sea | gave signals: the rivers stopped

52 Opelt 1964, 115–116; cf. Clark and Hatch 1981, 132: Fontaine 1981, 104; cf. Poinsotte 1986, 103–111.

53 Opelt 1964, 114–116.

> and the ground gaped open. | The very homes and the deepest part of Death's Tartarus were stunned | and the innermost shady caverns were wide open.
>
> *Cento* 631–635

By adopting the revival of dead souls from the Gospel of Matthew, the Virgilian underworld is once again brought to the fore in the *Cento*, emphasizing the sinfulness and tragic nature of the deed. More specifically, the souls that gather around Orpheus and lament Eurydice's fate have previously been used for the audience addressed by the narrator at the end of the Old Testament preface (*Cento* 55 ~ *G* 4.475). This implies an analogy between Proba and Orpheus, which is also picked up in the resurrection of Christ, where he is described with words belonging to Eurydice's shadow (*Cento* 650 ~ *G* 4.485 and *G* 4.486). This recurring equation between Christ and Eurydice defines him as the desired subject of Proba's song. The love and longing for Christ is also hypertextually emphasized in the description of how Christ's words remained fixed in the people's hearts after his death:[54]

> haerent infixi pectore vultus *A* 4.4
> verbaque, nec placidam membris dat cura quietem. *A* 4.5

> His guise was carved in their breasts | as was his words, and worries kept all ease and rest far from their bodies
>
> *Cento* 640–641

By re-using Dido's restlessness after having fallen in love with Aeneas, a semi-biblical typology is hinted at, where her desire becomes a type for the apostles' desire for Christ. Similarly, "an older man" (i.e. Peter) calls out to the deceased Christ not to depart with words addressed by Aeneas to Dido's ghost: "do not disappear from our sight" (*teque aspectu ne subtrahe nostro*, 647 ~ *A* 6.465). Thus, the erotic love of Dido and Aeneas is transformed into the sacred love between Christ and his followers. One last example is found in the resurrection (*Cento* 648–681 ≈ Matt. 28:2–20; Mark 16:4–18; Luke 24:2–49; John 20:1–29), where verses from Aeneas' first meeting with Dido becomes the longed-for reunion between Christ and the crowds:[55]

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54 This later became a rather common motive in both pagan and Christian literature; cf. Courcelle 1984, 282–283.

55 Cf. *De Ecclesia* 77–79, Schenkl 1888, 625 it is used in the same sense; cf. Courcelle 1984, 117, n. 609.

invenit admirans numerum ¦ cunctisque repente — *A* 2.797 ¦ *A* 1.594
inprovisus ait: "coram, quem quaeritis, adsum." — *A* 1.595

He wondered at their number and suddenly, | without warning, he said: "I, the one you are seeking, stand before you"
Cento 662–663

After this, Christ delivers a speech to the crowds, announcing his triumphal return and blessing those who praised him while he was gone. This section contains several verses originally relating to the founding of Rome: Christ's arduous way back to life is analogous to Anchises' recognition of the hardships that Aeneas went through to get to him in the underworld (*Cento* 664 ~ *A* 6.688), and Christ's encouragement of the crowds derives from Aeneas' exhortation to his men to hurry as they are fleeing from Carthage (*Cento* 665 ~ *A* 4.573). Their new life in Christ is described through prophesies of the Trojans' arrival in Italy, delivered by Celaeno and the oracle on Delos (*Cento* 670–672 ~ *A* 3.250 and 3.94–96). In three consecutive verses, the poet re-uses lines that are related to death in the hypotext and that add a certain tenor to the heroic death of Christ. First Proba re-uses Aeneas' lament at the deathbed of Pallas (666–667 ~ *A* 11.54–55), thus suggesting a link between Christ and Pallas who both sacrificed their lives for the new Empire. Thereafter, Aeneas addresses those who died at Troy: "O, three and four times blessed were those who died before their fathers' eyes beneath the walls of Troy."[56] (*O terque quaterque beati,* | *quis ante ora patrum Troiae sub moenibus altis* | *contigit oppetere*, 667 ~ *A* 1.94). In this case, death appears as a liberation from the torments of earth.[57]

One important difference between the founding of Rome and the founding of this spiritual empire is that it will not require blood spill, anaphorically underlined in the threefold occurrence of the word *pax* at the end of the speech:[58]

quod superest, laeti bene gestis ordine rebus — *A* 9.157
pacem orate manu, ¦ pacem laudate sedentes — *A* 10.80 ¦ 11.460
magnanimi; ¦ pacis solum inviolabile pignus. — *A* 6.649 etc. ¦ 11.363

56 Transl. Mandelbaum 2003 (1961), 4.
57 Sineri 2011, 283.
58 Cf. Margoni-Kögler 2001, 128.

> Moreover, with things done in due order, | pray for peace joyfully with your hand, praise the peace seated and | magnanimous! The only inviolable guarantee for peace.
>
> *Cento* 674–676

In the ascension (*Cento* 682–686 ≈ Mark 16:19; Luke 24:51), Christ is represented with verses referring to Mercury, the god who could move between the realms of the gods, mortals and the dead (*Cento* 684 ≈ *A* 4.277), but a more prominent leading reminiscence in the final scene of the *Cento* is the feast of Hercules:

ex illo celebratus honos, laetique minores	*A* 8.268
servavere diem ¦ tot iam labentibus annis.	*A* 8.269 ¦ 2.14
I decus, i, nostrum, ¦ tantarum gloria rerum,	*A* 6.546 ¦ 4.232 etc.
et nos et tua dexter adi pede sacra secundo	*A* 8.302
annua, quae differre nefas. celebrate faventes	*A* 8.173
hunc, socii, morem sacrorum	*A* 3.408

> From this time his honor has been celebrated and younger generations | have delighted in maintaining the day already for so many years now. | Go forward, our pride! Go forward, glory of great deeds, | come to us and to your sacred annual rites with auspicious steps, | which must not be postponed. Comrades, celebrate, | honoring this sacred custom!
>
> *Cento* 687–692

The analogy between the Christian God and Hercules was previously hinted at in the *Cento* where Christ encourages his followers to: "call on our common God" (*communemque vocate deum*, 471 ~ *A* 8.275). Here, the heroic model becomes clearer through the parallelism between Hercules' *apotheosis* and Christ's ascension. This typology is not unusual. As mentioned earlier, Clement and Origen even called Jesus "the real Hercules".[59] The pagan hero's physical strength foreshadowed Christ's spiritual power, and his twelve deeds prefigured Christ's miracles. These superhuman qualities are emblematically supplemented by symbols of Roman piety as the exhortation to Christ to lead onwards derives from exhortations related to Aeneas' mission (*Cento* 689A ~ *A* 6.546 and 4.232).

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59 Berkeley 1978, 5.

Summary and Conclusion

The polyphonic nature of the *Cento* gives the nature of its characters protean qualities. However, through clear tendencies in the re-use of verses, particular characters and events are arranged in biblical and semi-biblical typological patterns. The figure of Christ is connected to Old Testament types (such as Moses and Adam) by combined external and internal typology, and to Roman types through hypertextual connections to the Virgilian text. A recurrent Virgilian figure is Hercules, whose apotheosis functions as a semi-biblical type foreshadowing the resurrection and ascension of Christ. Similarly, Hector's sacrifice for Troy becomes a prefiguration of Christ's sacrifice for the Christians. Besides such combinations of epic heroes in the characterization of Christ, the text also connects him to female characters in the hypotext, such as the Amazon maiden warrior Camilla and the goddess Iris, thus occasionally destabilizing his gender. As a rule, the main figures are not constituted exclusively by verses that describe characters of one sex. This circumstance makes it problematic to read the *Cento* as an idealization of masculine heroism. Mary assumes the role of a brave hero in the narrative (Joseph is altogether excluded), and she escapes from Herod alone to hide her child from the soldiers. At their hiding place, the two are described with verses that derive from Metabus taking care of his daughter Camilla, reversing their sexes in relation to the hypotext. Thus, the *Cento* taps into this inverting quality of Virgil's epic in order to represent the virgin birth of Christ.

Moreover, God and Christ are often represented through verses describing Venus and Cupid in the *Aeneid*. In this way, the *Cento* hints that the Son of God is sent to earth to awaken the human race through love. Similarly, the love of Dido and Aeneas is repeatedly used to describe the love of Christ, especially in connection with the resurrection, where words spoken by the Roman hero and the African queen are transformed into the sacred love between Christ and his followers.

Through the interaction between the hypotexts and hypertext, the teachings of Proba's Christ assume the form of analogies according to which the Romans must found a Christian kingdom as the Trojans once founded the Roman Empire. This theme reemerges in several episodes: Verses describing the last supper are taken from important Roman feasts: a new empire needs new rites.

Finally, by describing the rich young man with a unique metapoetic reference to Virgil in the fourth book of the *Georgics*, a dialogue is established between Virgil as the embodiment of Roman pagan culture and the new religion. In the same episode, Christ is represented by Cupid, which makes the rich young man's longing for Christ analogous to the pre-Christian desire for the

religion of love in Virgil. This harkens back to Proba's basic mission to "declare that Virgil sang about the pious feats of Christ" (*Cento* 23). By imposing Virgilian moments (Aeneas and Deiphobus, Dido and Sychaeus, Juturna cursing her immortality, Aeneas and Dido), the scene ends quite tragically and without any reconciliation, just as in the Gospels. Continuing the previous metapoetic reading of the rich young man as representing Virgil, this would be the only moment of anxiety about the Roman poet's relationship to Christianity in the *Cento*. In the end, Virgil cannot let go of his riches and is unable to fully form part of the new religion.

The Cento of Proba

Romulidum ductor, clari lux altera solis,
eoa qui regna regis moderamine iusto,
spes orbis fratrisque decus, dignare Maronem
mutatum in melius divino agnoscere sensu,
scribendum famulo quem iusseras. Hic tibi mundi
principium formamque poli hominemque creatum
expediet limo. Hic Christi proferet ortum,
insidias regis, magorum praemia, doctos
discipulos pelagique minas gressumque per aequor,
hic fractum famulare iugum vitamque reductam
unius crucis auxilio reditumque sepultae
mortis et ascensum pariter sua regna petentis.
Haec relegas servesque diu tradasque minori
Arcadio, haec ille suo semini, haec tua semper
accipiat doceatque suos augusta propago.

The apparatus is selective. Ed. based on Schenkl 1888, manuscripts used for the dedication: Rome, Biblioteca Angelica, 1350; **A** = *Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Aug. 217;* **T** = *Zürich, Zentralbibliothek, C 68; Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 23.15; Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, cl. XII 7; München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 1868.* *vs 1* clara **AT** *vs 10* fractum *Aldus Manutius* : fructu *Ziehen, Philologus 57, 1898, 414–415* (*ad lignum crucis spectans*) : factum **AT** : fructum *cett.*

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Leader of Romulus' descendants, the second light of the bright sun,
you who reign over the eastern realms with just command,
the world's hope and your brother's glory. Think it fit to reacquaint yourself
with Maro changed for the better in a sacred meaning,
whom you ordered your servant to write. Here he will relate the world's
beginning, the shape of heaven and man created
from clay. Here he will set forth the birth of Christ,
the plot of the king, the offerings of the magi, the disciples
taught, and the perils on the sea as well as the walking on water;
here the yoke of slavery broken and life redeemed
through the aid of the one cross; the return from death's
tomb along with the ascension as He departed to his kingdom.
Read it yet again, preserve it for a long time and hand it over to the younger
Arcadius, and may he do the same to his offspring. May your
august descent always assume it and teach it to their own.

Iam dudum temerasse duces pia foedera pacis,	Luc. 4.205; 365
regnandi *miseros tenuit quos* dira cupido,	*G* 1.37
diversasque neces, regum crudelia bella	
cognatasque acies, *pollutos caede parentum*	Luc. 1.4
insignis clipeos nulloque ex hoste tropaea,	*G* 3.32
sanguine conspersos tulerat quos fama triumphos,	
innumeris totiens viduatas civibus urbes,	*A* 7.572
confiteor, scripsi: satis est meminisse malorum:	
nunc, deus omnipotens, sacrum, precor, accipe carmen	
aeternique tui septemplicis ¦ ora resolve	*A* 12.925 ¦ 3.457; cf. Iuv. 1.356
spiritus atque mei resera penetralia cordis,	Iuv. 4.7
arcana ut possim vatis Proba cuncta referre.	
non nunc ambrosium cura est mihi quaerere nectar,	
nec libet Aonio de vertice ducere Musas,	*G* 3.11
non mihi saxa loqui vanus persuadeat error	
laurigerosque sequi tripodas et inania vota	
iurgantesque deos *procerum* ¦ victosque penates:	contr. pag. 22 ¦ *A* 1.68
nullus enim labor est verbis extendere famam	*A* 10.468 (factis)
atque hominum studiis parvam disquirere laudem:	Iuv. 2.686
Castalio sed fonte madens imitata beatos	
quae sitiens hausi sanctae libamina lucis	
hinc canere incipiam. *praesens, deus,* ¦ erige mentem;	*G* 1.5 ¦ Luc. 8.76
Vergilium cecinisse loquar pia munera Christi.	
Rem nulli obscuram ¦ repetens ab origine pergam,	*A* 11.343 ¦ 1.372
si qua fides *animo, si vera* ¦ infusa per artus	*A* 3.434 (animum) ¦ 6.726
mens agitat molem et *toto* se corpore miscet	*A* 6.727 (magno)
spiritus *et* ¦ quantum non noxia corpora tardant	*A* 6.726 ¦ *A* 6.731
terrenique hebetant artus moribundaque membra.	*A* 6.732
O pater, o hominum rerumque aeterna potestas,	*A* 10.18
da facilem cursum atque ¦ animis inlabere nostris,	*G* 1.40 ¦ *A* 3.89

The apparatus is selective. Ed. based on Schenkl 1888, manuscripts used for the Cento: **S** = *Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 13048;* **P** = *Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 7701;* **La** = *Laon, Bibliothèque Municipale, 279;* **Lb** = *Laon, Bibliothèque Municipale, 273;* **π** = *Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica, Pal. lat. 1753;* **A** = *Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Aug. 217;* **T** = *Zürich, Zentralbibliothek, C 68;* **Ra** = *Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica, Reg. lat. 251;* **Rb** = *Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica, Reg. lat. 1666;* **Ch** = *Charleville-Mézières, Bibliothèque Municipal, 97;* **C** = *Cambridge, Trinity College Library, O. 7.7;* **V** = *Girardino* (*Venice 1472*) *vs 5* nulloque **V** : multoque **Ch** : nullaque *cett.* *vs 12* vates **P** *vs 17* deas **Rb** *vs 24* pandam **πRaV** *vs 25* animum **SπA** *vs 25* vera infusa *Schenkl* : veros fusa *codd.*

In days gone by, of leaders who transgressed sacred treaties of peace,
doomed men caught by a vicious lust for power,
of numerous murders, of the cruel wars of kings,
of kindred battle lines and gleaming shields
stained with patricidal blood, of trophies taken from no enemy,
of bloody triumphs announced by their fame,
of cities so often deprived of countless citizens,
I confess, I wrote of these things. So much for recalling evils!
Now, God Almighty, I pray: receive this sacred song
loosen the mouth of your eternal sevenfolded Spirit,
and open up my heart's inner chambers,
in order that I, Proba, may disclose all mysteries of the poet.[1]
I no longer care to seek out ambrosian nectar,
nor do I wish to lead the Muses down from the Aonian peak.
Vain deception cannot convince me that rocks can speak
and make me follow tripods decked with laurel and empty vows,
the quarrelling gods of noble princes and defeated Penates.
For it is no concern of mine to increase my reputation through words
and through human endeavor seek a meager glory.
No, soaked in the Castalian source, as one who has imitated the blessed
and quenched her thirst with the drink offering of the sacred light,
here I will begin to sing. God, be present and keep my mind upright.
I will declare that Virgil sang about the pious feats of Christ.
I will relate from the beginning a subject known to all,
if there is any faith in my soul, if a true mind flows through my limbs,
enlivens my form, and if the spirit mingles completely with my body
as far as it is not checked by unfavorable bodies
or blunted by the earthly joints and mortal limbs.
    O Father, o eternal might over people and things,
make my path easy and glide into our souls,

1 The translation supposes that *vatis* is a genitive referring to Virgil. Alternatively it could refer to Proba, in which case the translation would read "in order that I, Proba the prophet, may disclose all mysteries". The reading *vates* in P requires the latter interpretation.

tuque ades inceptumque una decurre laborem,		*G* 2.39
nate, patris summi ¦ vigor et caelestis origo,		*A* 1.665 ¦ 6.730
quem primi colimus ¦ meritosque novamus honores,		*A* 11.786 ¦ 8.189
iam nova progenies, ¦ omnis quem credidit aetas,		*E* 4.7 ¦ *A* 7.680
[munera vestra cano; ¦ satis est potuisse videri].	34b	*G* 1.12 ¦ *E* 6.24
nam memini ¦ veterum volvens monumenta virorum		*A* 8.157 ¦ 3.102
Musaeum ante omnes ¦ vestrum cecinisse ¦ per orbem		*A* 6.667 ¦ *E* 10.70 ¦ 8.9 etc.
quae sint, quae fuerint, quae mox ventura trahantur,		*G* 4.393
omnia, *ut* ipse tener mundi concreverit orbis.		E 6.34 (et)
felix, qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,		*G* 2.490
unde hominum pecudumque genus vitaeque volantum		*A* 6.728 (inde)
et quae marmoreo fert monstra sub aequore pontus;		*A* 6.729
† et liquidi simul ignis ¦ ⟨	42a	*E* 6.33
..........................⟩ ¦ et caeli mobilis umor †.	42b	*G* 1.417
haut aliter ¦ prima crescentis origine mundi		*A* 1.399 ¦ *G* 2.336
inluxisse dies aliumve habuisse tenorem		*G* 2.337
crediderim. ¦ maior rerum mihi nascitur ordo,		*G* 2.338 ¦ *A* 7.44
si qua fidem tanto est operi latura vetustas.		*A* 10.792
namque—fatebor enim—¦ levium spectacula rerum		*E* 1.31 ¦ *G* 4.3
semper equos atque arma virum pugnasque *canebam*		*A* 9.777 (canebat)
et studio incassum ¦ volui exercere *laborem*.		*G* 1.387 ¦ *A* 8.378 (labores)
omnia temptanti ¦ potior sententia visa est		*G* 4.328 ¦ *A* 4.287
pandere res altas terra et caligine mersas.		*A* 6.267
inque dies ¦ aliquid iam dudum invadere magnum		*G* 3.553 ¦ *A* 9.186
mens agitat mihi, nec placida contenta quiete est.		*A* 9.187
ore favete omnes ¦ laetasque advertite mentes,		*A* 5.71 ¦ 5.304
matres atque viri ¦ pueri innuptaeque puellae.		*G* 4.475 / *A* 6.306 ¦ *G* 4.476
Gen. 1:1–6 + 14–18 Principio caelum ac terras camposque liquentes		*A* 6.724
lucentemque globum lunae ¦ solisque labores		*A* 6.725 ¦ 1.742
ipse pater statuit, ¦ vos, o clarissima mundi		*G* 1.353 ¦ 1.5
lumina, labentem caelo quae ducitis annum.		*G* 1.6

vs 34 quam **Sπ** *vs 34b in* **πV** *reperitur* *vs 35* sacrorum **SCh** *vs 36* Moseum **LT** : Moyseum **Sπ** *vs 38 fort.* omnis, *cf. Vergilii cod. P* *vs 38* ut **SChCV** : et **cett.** *vs 42b locus turbatus : vs 38, 39, 40, 41, 42* (et liquidi simul ignis ut his exordia primis terrarumque animaeque marisque fuissent) **π** (*ex* E *6.34*) : *39, 42a, 42b* (⟨semina terrarumque⟩ et caeli *etc.*), *38, 40, 41 Schenkl* : *vs 38, 39, 42b* (⟨semina terrarumque⟩ et caeli mobilis umor⟨em⟩), *42a* (et liquidi simul ignis ⟨et aeris incrementum⟩), *40, 41 Green* : *vs 39, 42b* (qua ratione aer et caeli mobilis umor), *42a* (et liquidi simul ignis semina terrarumque:), *40, 41*

and you, the son, be present too and take part in completing my undertaking,
you, the supreme Father's vigor and the celestial source,
who we are first to worship, and whose well-deserved honors we renew,
now a new child, you in whom every age believed.
34b [your gifts I celebrate; it is enough to seem able to do so.]
For when I think of the work of our ancestors, I remember
above all your Musaeus, who sang throughout the world
of things that were, that had been, that were soon to be,
all of this, how the tender orb of earth took shape.
Happy he who was able to understand the causes of things,
whence originates mankind, the animal race, the lives of birds,
and the monsters that move beneath the marbled surface.
42a and of the bright fire ⟨..................................
42b ....⟩ and the mist of the moving sky.[2]
That the day at the very origin of the growing world
dawned in some other way or had another character,
this I could not believe. A greater order of things opens before me
if old age will provide any faithfulness to so great a work.
For, I will confess, I used to sing about spectacles of trivial things,
always about horses, arms of men and battles
and I wished to devote my efforts to this futile task.
But as I was trying all of this, a greater plan appeared:
to disclose lofty matters buried in earth and mist,
and since long my mind drives me every day to try my hand at
something great and is no longer content with peaceful rest.
Keep silent, everyone, and give me your cheerful attention
mothers and men, boys and unmarried girls.
In the beginning, heaven, earth and the watery fields,
the shining orb of the moon and the labors of the sun
were established by the Father himself. You, the world's brightest
lights, who lead the advancing the year in the sky.

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2 Schenkl suspects that the corruption involve verses 38–42. Green suggests the following rearrangements and corrections "Happy he who was able to understand the causes of things, | ⟨the seeds of the earths⟩, the mist of the moving sky, | and ⟨the growth⟩ of the bright fire ⟨and the air⟩ | whence mankind originates, the animal race, the lives of birds, | and the monsters that move beneath the marbled surface." Pollman suggests: "Happy he who was able to understand the causes of things, | ⟨how air⟩ and the mist of the moving sky, | and ⟨the seeds⟩ of the bright fire ⟨and the earths⟩, whence mankind originates …"

	nam neque erant astrorum ignes nec lucidus aether,	*A* 3.585
	set nox atra polum bigis subvecta tenebat,	*A* 5.721 (et)
	et chaos ¦ in praeceps tantum *tendebat ad* umbras,	*A* 6.265 ¦ 6.578 (tenditque sub)
	quantus ad aetherium caeli suspectus Olympum.	*A* 6.579
	tum pater omnipotens, rerum cui summa potestas,	*A* 10.100
	aëra dimovit tenebrosum et dispulit umbras	*A* 5.839
	et medium luci atque umbris iam dividit orbem.	*G* 1.209
	sidera cuncta notat tacito labentia caelo	*A* 3.515
	intentos volvens oculos, ¦ qua parte calores	*A* 7.251 ¦ *G* 2.270
	69a austrinos tulerit, quae terga obverterit axi,	*G* 2.271
	69b [Obliquus qua se signorum verteret ordo.]	*G* 1.239
	postquam cuncta videt caelo constare sereno	*A* 3.518
	omnipotens ¦ stellis numeros et nomina fecit	*A* 10.615 etc. ¦ *G* 1.137
	temporibusque parem diversis quattuor annum	*G* 1.258
	aestusque pluviasque et agentes frigora ventos.	*G* 1.352
	atque haec ut certis possimus discere signis,	*G* 1.352
	vere tument terrae et genitalia semina poscunt	*G* 2.324
	ac medio tostas aestu terit area fruges	*G* 1.298 (et)
	et varios ponit fetus autumnus et *atra*	*G* 2.521 (alte)
	venit hiemps: teritur Sicyonia baca trapetis,	*G* 2.519
	atque in se sua per vestigia volvitur annus.	*G* 2.402
	tempore iam ex illo ¦ fecundis imbribus aether	*A* 1.623
	magnus alit magno conmixtus corpore fetus.	*G* 2.327
Gen. 1:6–10; 20–22	Et iam prima novo spargebat lumine terras	*A* 4.584; 9.459
	ducebatque diem ¦ stellis Aurora fugatis.	*A* 2.802 ¦ 3.521
	tum durare solum et discludere Nerea ponto	*E* 6.35
	incipit ¦ et rerum paulatim sumere formas.	*E* 9.60 etc. ¦ 6.36
	Et variae pelagi ¦ facies inmania cete	*G* 1.383 (iam) ¦ *A* 5.822
	aequora verrebant caudis aestumque secabant.	*A* 8.674
	nec non et ¦ vasti circum gens umida ponti	*A* 1.707 etc. ¦ *G* 4.430
	iam sole infuso, iam rebus luce retectis	*A* 9.461
	exsultans rorem late dispergit amarum.	*G* 4.431
	postera iamque dies primo surgebat eoo.	*A* 3.588
	fundit humus flores ¦ et frondes explicat omnes	*E* 9.41 ¦ *G* 2.335
	sanguineisque inculta rubent aviaria bacis,	*G* 2.430
	non rastris, hominum non ulli obnoxia curae.	*G* 2.439

vs 69b in πV *legitur*   *vs 74* possemus πV (*et pars codd. Vergilii*)

For before there were neither the fires of celestial bodies nor the bright ether,
but the black night riding in its chariot held the heavens
and Chaos extended headlong as deep into the shadows
as the gaze of an eye up to ethereal Olympus in heaven.
Then the almighty Father, who has supreme power over things,
separated the murky air and dispersed the shadows,
and now he divided world in halves for the light and for the shadows as well.
He observed all the stars gliding over the silent sky,
turning his watchful eyes to the region that withstood
69a the southern heat, that which turned its back towards the north pole,
69b [and where the slanting series of signs turns itself.]
When he had seen that all was still under a peaceful sky,
the Almighty gave numbers and names to the stars
and equally divided the year into four different seasons;
heat, rain and winds that bring cold.
And in order that should be able to recognize them through certain signs,
the earth swells up during spring and asks for fertile seeds
and in the mid-summer-heat the threshing-floor crumbles the dry grain.
Autumn produces various crops, and dark
winter comes: the Sicyonian fruits are squeezed in oil-mills;
and the year moves along the steps of its cycle.
From this time the great ether nourishes growth
with abundant rainfall, mingling with the vast body.

Now Dawn sprinkled the earth with the first light
and led forth the day as soon as the stars had been put to flight.
The the ground began to harden, separate Nereus the sea,
and gradually take on the shapes of things.
Sea monsters, huge in appearance, whipped the waters
of many a sea with their tails and cleaved the spray.
No less so did the watery race of the vast sea,
as the sun's rays were spreading out, as things were revealed in the light,
all around splash up briny drizzle far and wide.

And now the second day arose with its first dawn.
The earth sheds flowers and unfolds all of its foliage.
The uncultivated territories of birds glow red with blood-colored berries,
subjected neither to picks nor to the care of any man.

	tertia lux gelidam caelo dimoverat umbram.	*A* 9.210
	avia tum resonant avibus virgulta canoris	*G* 2.328
	et liquidas corvi presso *dant* gutture voces	*G* 1.410 (tum; ter)
	nec gemere aëria cessavit turtur ab ulmo.	*E* 1.58
	quarto terra die ¦ variarum monstra ferarum	*A* 3.205 ¦ 6.285
	omnigenumque ¦ pecus nullo custode per herbam	*A* 8.698 ¦ 3.221
	educit silvis ¦ subito ¦ mirabile visu.	*A* 6.765 (educet) ¦ 8.109 etc. ¦ 12.252
	tum demum movet arma leo, ¦ tum pessima tigris	*A* 12.6 ¦ *G* 3.248
	squamosusque draco et fulva cervice leaena	*G* 4.308
	saevire ac formae magnorum ululare luporum.	*A* 7.18
	cetera pascuntur virides armenta per herbas,	*G* 3.162
	nec gregibus liquidi fontes *nec* gramina desunt.	*G* 3.200 (non … non)
Gen. 1:25–26	iamque dies alterque dies processit, et ¦ omne	*A* 3.356 ¦ *G* 2.20 etc.
	hoc virtutis opus ¦ divinae mentis et haustus	*A* 10.469 ¦ *G* 4.220
	prospiciens genitor ¦ perfectis ordine *rebus*	*A* 1.155 ¦ 3.548 (votis)
	expleri mentem nequit ardescitque tuendo	*A* 1.713
	terrasque tractusque maris caelumque profundum,	*G* 4.222
	alituum pecudumque genus, ¦ secumque volutat,	*A* 8.27 ¦ 10.159
	qui mare, qui terras omni dicione tenerent,	*A* 1.236
	neu segnes iaceant terrae. ¦ ivuat usque morari.	*G* 2.37 ¦ *A* 4.487
	talia ¦ versanti *subito* sententia sedit,	*A* 1.102; etc. ¦ 9.551 (subito vix haec)
Gen. 2:7	felicemque *trahit* limum ¦ fingitque premendo	*G* 2.188 (trahunt) ¦ *A* 6.80
	pingue solum primis extemplo a mensibus anni.	*G* 1.64
Gen. 1:26–27	*Iamque* inproviso ¦ tantae pietatis imago	*A* 8.524 (namque) ¦ 6.405
	procedit ¦ nova forma viri ¦ pulcherrima primum,	*A* 3.592 ¦ 3.591 ¦ 9.253
	os umerosque deo similis, ¦ cui mentem animumque	*A* 1.589 ¦ 6.11
	maior agit deus atque opera ad maiora remittit.	*A* 12.429
Gen. 2:18–22	quaeritur huic alius; nec quisquam ex agmine tanto	*A* 5.378
	audet adire virum ¦ *sociusque* ¦ in regna vocari.	*A* 5.379 ¦ 9.322 (sociosque) ¦ 7.256; 578
	haut mora continuo ¦ placidam per membra quietem	*A* 4.548 ¦ 1.691
	dat iuveni *et* ¦ dulci declinat lumina somno.	*A* 3.611 (atque) ¦ 4.185
	Atque illi medio in spatio ¦ iam ¦ noctis opacae	*A* 10.219 ¦ 5.2 etc. ¦ 8.658
	omnipotens genitor ¦ *costas* et viscera *nudat*.	*A* 10.668 ¦ 1.211 (costis … nudant)
	harum unam iuveni ¦ laterum conpagibus ¦ artis	*A* 11.76 ¦ 1.122 ¦ 1.293

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vs 106 gregibus liquidi *codd. Vergilii*

The third light removed the cold darkness from the sky.
Then untrodden thickets reverberated with singing birds,
ravens emitted clear sounds from their narrow throats
and the turtle dove never ceased to moan from the lofty elm.
On the fourth day earth suddenly brought forth various wild beasts
and cattle of all kinds from the woods over the pasture,
with no shepherd guide them—a wonderful sight!
Then at last the lion wielded its weapons, then the malicious tiger,
the scaly snake and the yellow-necked lioness
raged and the shapes of huge wolves howled.
Other herds grazed on the green grass
and the flocks did not lack clear springs and pastures.
Now one day passed and yet another day,
and as this whole work of virtue and these sips of a divine mind
were examined by the Father, once things had been fulfilled in due order,
he could not satiate his mind and burned when beholding
the earth, the regions of the sea and the deep sky,
and the species of the birds and animals, and he pondered over
who should be master of the sea, who over the land.
lest the earth should lay inactive. He took joy in taking his time.
Considering such things he suddenly settled on a plan.
He pulled out fertile clay, kneaded it and immediately shaped
the rich earth of the year's first few months.
Now an image of great piety suddenly
appeared for the first time, man's new form of wonderful beauty,
in face and shoulders like God, his mind and spirit
are driven by God, who appoints great deeds for him.
A companion was asked for him, yet nobody from the great crowd
dared to approach the man and be called his partner in the kingdom.
Without any delay God suddenly infused a peaceful rest in the young man's
limbs and sealed his eyes with sweet sleep.
And now, in the midst of the dense night,
the Almighty laid the ribs and meat of that man bare.
He pulled out one of the sides from the young man's ribcage

	eripuit ¦ subitoque ¦ oritur mirabile ¦ donum—	*A* 5.464 etc. ¦ 8.637 ¦ 2.680 ¦ 1.650 etc.
	argumentum ingens—¦ claraque in luce refulsit	*A* 7.791 ¦ 1.588
	insignis facie ¦ et pulchro pectore virgo,	*A* 9.583 ¦ 3.426
	iam matura viro, iam plenis nubilis annis.	*A* 7.53
Gen. 2:23–24	olli somnum ingens rumpit pavor, ossaque et artus	*A* 7.458
	coniugium vocat ¦ ac stupefactus numine pressit	*A* 4.172 ¦ 7.119
	excepitque manu dextramque amplexus inhaesit.	*A* 8.124
	His demum exactis ¦ torquet qui sidera mundi	*A* 6.637 ¦ 9.93
	infit: eo dicente ¦ premit placida aequora pontus	*A* 10.101 ¦ 10.104
	et tremefacta solo tellus, silet arduus aether:	*A* 10.102
Gen. 1:28–30;2.8–15	"vivite felices ¦ interque nitentia culta	*A* 3.493 ¦ *G* 1.153
	fortunatorum nemorum sedesque beatas.	*A* 6.639
	haec domus, haec patria est, ¦ requies ea certa laborum.	*A* 7.122 (hic) ¦ 3.393 / 8.46
	his ego nec metas rerum nec tempora pono:	*A* 1.278
	imperium sine fine dedi, ¦ multosque per annos	*A* 1.279 ¦ 1.31 / *G* 4.208
	non rastros patietur humus, non vinea falcem.	*E* 4.40
	at genus inmortale manet, ¦ nec tarda senectus	*G* 4.208
	debilitat vires animi mutatque vigorem.	*A* 9.611
Gen. 2:9; 16–17	vos contra ¦ quae dicam animis advertite vestris. 147a	*A* 7.267 ¦ 2.712
	[In medio ramos annosaque bracchia *pandens*] 147b	*A* 6.282 (pandit)
	est in conspectu ¦ ramis felicibus arbos,	*A* 2.21 ¦ *G* 2.81
	quam neque fas igni cuiquam nec sternere ferro,	*A* 7.692
	religione *sacra* ¦ numquam concessa moveri.	*A* 7.608 (sacrae) ¦ 3.700
	hac quicumque *sacros* ¦ decerpserit arbore fetus,	*A* 11.591 (sacrum) ¦ 6.141
	morte luet merita: ¦ *nec* me sententia vertit.	*A* 11.849 ¦ 1.260 (neque)
	nec tibi tam prudens quisquam persuadeat auctor	*G* 2.315
	conmaculare manus ¦—liceat te voce moneri—,	*E* 8.48 ¦ *A* 3.461
	femina, ¦ nec te ullius violentia vincat,	*A* 4.211 etc. ¦ 11.354
	si te digna manet divini gloria ruris."	*G* 1.168
	postquam cuncta ¦ pater, ¦ caeli cui sidera parent,	*A* 3.518 ¦ 3.251 etc. ¦ 10.176
	conposuit, legesque dedit ¦ camposque nitentis	*A* 8.322 ¦ 6.677
	desuper ostentat, ¦ tantarum gloria rerum.	*A* 6.678 ¦ 4.232 / 4.272
Gen. 2.6–15	ecce autem primi sub limina solis et ortus	*A* 6.255
	devenere locos, ¦ ubi mollis amaracus *illos*	*A* 1.365 etc. ¦ 1.693 (illum)
	floribus et dulci adspirans conplectitur umbra.	*A* 1.694
	hic ver purpureum ¦ atque alienis mensibus aestas,	*E* 9.40 ¦ *G* 2.149
	hic liquidi fontes, ¦ *hic* caeli tempore certo	*G* 4.18 (at) ¦ 4.100 (hinc)

vs 147b in **SChCV** *legitur*

and suddenly a wonderful gift arose—
an immense subject matter!—and she shone forth in a bright light,
a maiden with illustrious features and a beautiful breast,
already mature enough for a man, already of marriageable age.
An immense horror broke his sleep, and he called the bones and the limbs
his wife. Amazed at the divine will, he approached her,
stretched out his hand, grabbed hers and held it.
Once these things had been fulfilled, he who turns the stars of the world
raised his voice, and as he spoke the sea put its waters to rest,
earth trembled at its foundation and the lofty ether fell silent:
"Live and be fruitful among the radiant fields of
the prosperous groves and blessed dwelling-places.
This is your home, this is your native land, a safe rest from toil.
For these I set no times or bounds of things,
I have given an unlimited power, and for many years
the soil will not be subjected to the plow, the vines not to the knife.
But your race will remain immortal, and slow old age
will not weaken the power of your spirit or alter your vigor.
147a But you, heed what I will say in your minds:
147b In the middle, extending its branches and ages arms,
you can see a tree with fertile branches,
which no one is permitted to harm with fire or iron,
and by the sacred laws of piety it must never be touched.
Anyone who plucks sacred shoots of this tree
will pay for it with well-deserved death, and no opinion changes my mind.
Do not let any instigator, if ever so prudent, convince you
to stain your hands—even if you are ordered by a voice—,
woman, and let no one's violence overcome you,
it the glory of the divine land will remain worthy of you."
Then the Father, whom the stars in heaven obey,
arranged everything, gave them laws and showed them
the bright fields from above, the glory of great deeds.
Behold! During the dawn and rising of the first sun,
they arrived at the place where mild marjoram
fragrantly embraced them with flowers and its sweet shade.
Here spring was purple, and summer came in unfamiliar months.
Here were clear springs, here, at a certain time of year,

	dulcia mella *premunt*, ¦ hic candida populus antro	*G* 4.101 (premes) ¦ *E* 9.41
	inminet et lentae texunt umbracula vites.	*E* 9.42
	invitant croceis halantes floribus horti	*G* 4.109 (invitent)
	inter odoratum lauri nemus ¦ ipsaque tellus	*A* 6.658 ¦ *G* 1.127
	omnia liberius nullo poscente ferebat.	*G* 1.128
	Fortunati ambo! ¦ si mens non laeva fuisset	*A* 9.446 ¦ 2.54 / *E* 1.16
	coniugis infandae: ¦ docuit post exitus ingens.	*A* 11.267 ¦ 5.523
Gen. 3:1–5	Iamque dies infanda aderat: ¦ per florea rura	*A* 2.132 ¦ 1.430
	ecce inimicus atrox ¦ inmensis orbibus anguis	*G* 1.407 ¦ *A* 2.204
	septem ingens gyros, septena volumina *versans*	*A* 5.85 (traxit)
	nec visu facilis nec dictu effabilis ulli	*A* 3.621
	obliqua invidia ¦ ramo frondente pependit,	*A* 11.337 ¦ 7.67
	vipeream spirans animam, ¦ cui tristia bella	*A* 7.351 ¦ 7.325
	iraeque insidiaeque et crimina noxia cordi.	*A* 7.326
	odit et ipse pater: ¦ tot sese vertit in ora	*A* 7.327 ¦ 7.328
	arrectisque horret squamis, et, ¦ ne quid inausum	*A* 11.754 ¦ 8.205
	aut intemptatum scelerisve dolive ¦ relinquat,	*A* 8.206 ¦ 4.415 etc.
	sic prior adgreditur dictis ¦ seque obtulit ultro:	*A* 6.387 ¦ 8.611
	“dic”, ait, “o virgo ¦—lucis habitamus opacis	*A* 6.318 ¦ 6.673
	riparumque toros et prata recentia rivis	*A* 6.674
	incolimus—, ¦ quae tanta animis ignavia venit?	*A* 6.675 ¦ 11.733
	strata iacent passim sua quaeque sub arbore poma,	*E* 7.54
	pocula sunt fontes liquidi: ¦ caelestia dona	*G* 3.529 ¦ 4.1
	adtractare nefas: ¦ id rebus defuit unum.	*A* 2.719 ¦ 12.643
	quid prohibet ¦ causas penitus temptare latentes?	*A* 5.631 (quis) ¦ 3.32
	vana superstitio. ¦ rerum pars altera adempta est.	*A* 8.187
	quo vitam dedit aeternam? cur mortis adempta est	*A* 12.879
	condicio? ¦ mea si non inrita dicta putaris,	*A* 12.880 ¦ 10.244
	auctor ego audendi ¦ sacrata resolvere iura.	*A* 12.159 ¦ 2.157
	tu coniunx, tibi fas animum temptare precando.	*A* 4.113
	dux ego vester *ero*: ¦ tua si mihi certa voluntas,	*E* 8.38 (eram) ¦ *A* 4.125
	exstruimusque toros dapibusque epulamur opimis.”	*A* 3.224
Gen. 3:6	sic ait, et dicto citius, ¦ quod lege tenetur,	*A* 1.142 ¦ 12.819
	subiciunt epulis ¦ olim venerabile lignum	*A* 7.110 ¦ 12.767
	instituuntque dapes ¦ contactuque omnia foedant.	*A* 7.109 ¦ 3.227
	praecipue infelix pesti devota futurae	*A* 1.712
	mirataque novas frondes et non sua poma,	*G* 2.82

vs 175 affabilis **A** (*et pars codd. Vergilii*) *vs 201* mirataque **PLπ** : miraturque *cett.* *vs 201 post 202 in* **Plπ**

they reaped the honey, here white poplar
hung above the cave, and pliant vines wove shady foliage.
Gardens enticed them with the scent of saffron flowers
in the midst of a fragrant laurel grove, and the earth itself
brought fourth crops generously without anyone asking for it.
Fortunate, both of them! If only the mind of the accursed wife
not had been so adverse, as their terrible end later showed.
Now the accursed day had arrived. Behold! Through flowery fields
a cruel and hostile snake moving in enormous coils,
huge in seven gyres, winding in seven loops.
Difficult to behold, and impossible for all to speak of.
With envy it hung down from a green, crooked branch,
exhaling its viperous breath. In its heart
it longed for gloomy wars, anger, betrayal and heinous crimes.
Even the Father hated it. It changed so much in form
and was terrifying with its raised scales. And lest it should
leave any crime or deceit unattempted and untested,
the serpent spoke the following word and brought itself in her presence:
“Tell me,” he said, “virgin—we live in shady groves,
on the beds of river banks and meadows washed
by streams—what great idleness has come to your spirit?
The apples are strewn around their trees on the ground
and your drinking cups are clear springs. It is not allowed
to touch the heavenly gift, this is the only thing missing.
What prevents you from exploring causes that lie hidden deep?
Empty superstition! Half of everything has been taken away from you.
For what reason did he give you eternal life? Why was the lot of death
taken away from you? Unless you believe that my words are spoken in vain,
I will be the instigator for you to dare breaking the sacred vows.
You, the wife, it is right that you put the spirit on trial through beseeching.
I’ll be your guide, if your trust for me is certain:
let us set up couches and dine at a superb feast!”
So he said, and sooner than he had spoken, they subjected
that which was guarded by law, the once venerated tree, to a banquet
and prepared a meal, polluting everything with their touch.
Especially the miserable wife, devoted to future calamity.
She marveled at the new leaves and at the fruit that was not hers,

	causa mali tanti, ¦ summo tenus attigit ore.	*A* 6.93 ¦ 1.737
	maius adorta nefas maioremque orsa furorem	*A* 7.386
	heu misero coniunx ¦ aliena ex arbore germen	*A* 2.738 ¦ *G* 2.76
	obicit ¦ *atque animum* ¦ *subita* dulcedine movit.	*A* 6.421 ¦ 10.648 ¦ 11.538 (subitaque animum)
Gen. 3:7	continuo nova lux oculis effulsit; ¦ at illi	*A* 9.731 ¦ 8.443
	terrentur visu subito ¦ nec plura *morati*	*A* 8.109 ¦ 5.381 (moratus)
	corpora sub ramis ¦ obtentu frondis inumbrant—	*A* 7.108 ¦ 11.66
	consertum tegumen—¦ nec spes opis ulla dabatur.	*A* 3.594 ¦ 2.803
Gen. 3:8	At non haec nullis hominum ¦ rerumque repertor	*A* 11.725 ¦ 12.829
	observans oculis ¦ caedes *et* facta tyranni	*A* 11.726 ¦ 8.483 (quid)
	praesensit: ¦ notumque furens quid femina posset.	*A* 4.297 ¦ 5.6
	continuo invadit: ¦ “procul, o procul este profani”	*A* 4.265 ¦ 6.258
	conclamat, ¦ caelum ac terras qui numine *firmat*.	*A* 6.259 ¦ 4.269 (torquet)
	atque illi longe gradientem ac dira frementem	*A* 10.572
	ut videre, metu versi retroque ruentes	*A* 10.573
	diffugiunt silvasque et sicubi concava furtim	*A* 5.677
	saxa petunt. piget incepti lucisque, ¦ neque auras	*A* 5.678 ¦ 6.733
	dispiciunt; ¦ taedet caeli convexa tueri.	*A* 6.734 ¦ 4.451
Gen. 3:8–11	Nec longum in medio tempus, ¦ cum creber ad aures	*A* 9.395 ¦ 2.731
	visus adesse pedum sonitus genitorque per *auras*	*A* 2.732 (umbram)
	hunc, ubi vix multa maestum cognovit in umbra,	*A* 6.340
	talibus *adloquitur* dictis ¦ atque increpat ultro:	*A* 8.611 (adfata est) ¦ 6.387
	“infelix, quae tanta animum dementia cepit?	*A* 5.465
	quis furor iste novus? quo nunc, quo tenditis”, inquit,	*A* 5.670
	“regnorum inmemores, ¦ quae mentem insania mutat?	*A* 4.194 ¦ 4.595
	dicite, ¦ quae lucis miseris tam dira cupido?	*A* 6.669 etc. ¦ 6.721
	maturate fugam ¦ totoque absistite luco:	*A* 1.137 ¦ 6.259
	nec revocare gradum, ¦ si quando adversa vocarint,	*A* 6.128 (sed) ¦ 9.172
	est licitum; ¦ flammis ambit torrentibus amnis	*A* 10.344 ¦ 6.550
	per medium stridens ¦ torquetque sonantia saxa	*A* 12.926 ¦ 6.551
	attollitque globos flammarum et sidera lambit.	*A* 3.574
	ille sub haec: ¦ “tua me, genitor, tua tristis imago	*A* 5.394 ¦ 6.695
	⟨* * *⟩	

vs 204 misera **PLπ** *vs 229* vocaverint **S** *post correctionem* : vocarent *cett.* *vs post 233* ⟨saepius occurrens * * * ⟩ *Schenkl dubitanter* (= A *6.696*)

the cause of so much evil, and she touched it lightly with her lips.[3]
Approaching a greater crime, beginning a greater madness
the wife offered the fruit to her unfortunate husband from the tree
that did not belong to them, and touched his heart with a sudden sweetness.[4]
Immediately a new light sparked in their eyes, but they
were frightened by the sudden sight and without further delay
covered their bodies under green branches—
an entwined veil—no hope of help was given.
The Creator of human beings and things observed these things
with his eyes and sensed in advance murders and the acts of a tyrant.
For he knew what an insane woman was able to do.
Then immediately he assailed them with words: "Away, unjust, away with you!"
he cried, he who upholds heaven and earth through his divine power.
But as they saw him coming with wide strides and roaring
with anger, they turned around in fear, ran backwards,
took flight and stole away into the forest and the hollow
rocks. They regretted what they had started and shunned the sight of light
and air; it pained them to look towards the sky's vault.
Shortly thereafter the dense sound of footsteps
appeared to their ears, and the Father spoke to him through the air,
hardly recognizing the unfortunate man in the deep darkness,
uttering these words and scolding him:
"Wretched man, what foolishness has gripped your spirit?
What is this new madness? Where to now, where will you go?" he said,
"forgetful of my kingdom, what insanity alters your mind?
Tell me: What terrible desire for light possesses you, miserable couple?
Hurry on in your flight, get away from this grove!
And it is not permitted to return, even if they were to call you back,
A river with streams of fire surrounds it,
running through the middle, and it clashes against the sounding rocks.
It casts up flaming spheres and licks the stars."
The man replied: "Father, your gloomy image
[one or two lines missing]

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3 Some manuscripts offer another order: "Especially the miserable wife, devoted to future calamity, the cause of so much evil. She touched it lightly with her lips and marveled at the new leaves and at the fruit that was not hers".

4 "when they saw each other naked", according to a scribe in π.

	his posuere locis: ¦ merui nec deprecor", inquit,	*A* 8.335 ¦ 12.931
	"omnipotens, ¦ sonitumque pedum vocemque tremesco	*A* 10.615 etc. ¦ 3.648
Gen. 3:12	conscius audacis facti: ¦ monitisque sinistris	*A* 11.812 ¦ 10.110
	femina ¦ fert tristis sucos tardumque saporem.	*A* 4.211 etc. ¦ *G* 2.126
	illa dolos dirumque nefas *sub* pectore *versans*	*A* 4.563 (in … versat)
	insontem infando indicio, ¦ moritura puella	*A* 2.84 ¦ *G* 4.458
	dum furit, incautum crudeli morte ¦ peremit;	*A* 10.386 ¦ 6.442
	suasit ¦ enim—¦ scis ipse, neque est te fallere cuiquam—	*A* 10.367 ¦ 9.340 etc. ¦ *G* 4.447
	ut vidi, ut perii, ut me malus abstulit error	*A* 8.41
	contigimusque *manu* ¦ quod non sua seminat arbor."	*A* 11.245 (manum) ¦ 6.206
Gen. 3:14	tum pater omnipotens ¦ solio *sic* infit ab alto:	*A* 10.100 ¦ 11.301 (rex)
	"accipite ergo animis atque haec mea figite dicta:	*A* 3.250
	tuque prior, ¦ scelere ante alios inmanior omnis,	*A* 6.834 ¦ 1.347
	quem nec longa dies pietas nec mitigat ulla,	*A* 5.783
	hortator scelerum, ¦ coluber, mala gramina pastus	*A* 6.529 ¦ 4.271
	desidia latamque trahens inglorius alvum	*G* 4.94
	cede locis, ¦ nullis hominum cogentibus, ipse,	*A* 7.559
	tenuis ubi argilla et dumosis calculus arvis.	*G* 2.180
Gen. 3:17–19	at tibi pro scelere" exclamat, "pro talibus ausis	*A* 2.535
	omne aevum ferro teritur, ¦ primusque per artem,	*A* 9.609 ¦ *G* 1.122
	heu miserande puer, ¦ terram insectabere rastris	*A* 6.882 ¦ *G* 1.155
	et sonitu terrebis aves: ¦ *horrebit* in arvis	*G* 1.156 ¦ 1.151 (horreret)
	carduus et spinis *surget* paliurus acutis	*E* 5.39 (surgit)
	lappaeque tribolique ¦ et fallax herba veneni.	*G* 1.153 ¦ *E* 4.24
	at si triticeam in messem robustaque farra	*G* 1.219
	exercebis humum, ¦ frustra spectabis acervum	*G* 1.220 ¦ 1.158
	concussaque famem in silvis solabere quercu.	*G* 1.159
	insuper his ¦ subeunt morbi tristisque senectus	*A* 9.274 ¦ *G* 3.67
	et labor et durae rapit inclementia mortis.	*G* 3.68
Gen. 3:16	haec tibi semper erunt, ¦ tuque, o *saevissima* coniunx,	*E* 5.74 ¦ *A* 11.158 (sanctissima)
	non ignara mali, ¦ caput horum et causa malorum,	*A* 1.630 ¦ 11.361
	magna lues commissa tibi: ¦ heu perdita *nescis*	*G* 4.454 ¦ *A* 4.541 (necdum)
	nec quae te circum stent deinde pericula cernis.	*A* 4.561
	nunc ¦ morere, ut merita es, ¦ tota quod mente petisti:	*A* 2.550 ¦ 4.547 ¦ 4.100
	nec mea iam mutata loco sententia cedit."	*A* 9.220
	At iuvenem ¦ primum saevus circumstetit horror:	*A* 7.780 (et) ¦ 2.559

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vs 263 saevissima **ChCV** : sanctissima *cett.* (*et codd. Vergilii*)

[These things] placed me here. I deserved it and do not ask for mercy", he said,
"Almighty, and I tremble at the sound of your feet and your voice,
since I am aware of the audacious crime. With sinister exhortations
the woman offered me the bitter fruit and its long aftertaste.
Under her breast she planned deceit and terrible sin,
against me, innocent, with unspeakable treachery. The girl doomed to die,
while she was raging, ruined me, reckless, with cruel death.
For she persuaded me; you yourself know, since no one can deceive you.
as I saw, as I was ruined, as I let evil deception take hold of me
and we touched with our hands what the host tree had not generated."
Then the almighty Father spoke as follows from his high throne:
"Then listen to me and imprint my words into your minds:
First of all you, worse in your crime than all others,
you whom neither the long day nor piety can mitigate,
instigator of crimes, the snake. You, who feed on venomous herbs
and slothfully drag your broad belly without glory.
Away with you! Go of your own accord, without any man forcing you,
to places where thin mud and gravel cover the thorny fields.
But for your crime," he cried, "for such outrages
each generation is worn out by iron, and through technology,
my poor child, you will be the first to diligently work the soil with the plow
and frighten the birds with the noise. In the fields the wild thistle
will horrify you and the thickets will rise with sharp thorns,
burrs, land caltrops and treacherous poisonous herbs.
But if, for a harvest of wheat and hardy ears of corn,
you work the soil, you will hope for a bountiful harvest in vain,
and in the woods you will shake the oak to ease the ache of hunger.
On top of these things illness will come to you and dismal old age,
and toil and the mercilessness of stern death snatches you.
These things will always be your lot. And you, the ferocious wife,
not unaware of your evil deed, you are the head and cause of these evils,
you will atone for your great crimes. You are lost, don't you know it
and can't you see the dangers that surround you?
Now you die, as you deserve and have searched for with all your mind.
and my mind is not changed and does not give way."
Then a ferocious horror surrounded the first young man.

	deriguere oculi, ¦ nec se celare tenebris	*A* 7.447 ¦ 9.425
	amplius aut ¦ notas audire et reddere voces.	*A* 9.426 ¦ 6.689
Gen. 3:23	haut mora, festinant iussi rapidisque feruntur	*A* 7.156
	passibus, ¦ et pariter gressi per opaca viarum	*A* 7.157 ¦ 6.633
	corripiunt spatium medium ¦ limenque relinquunt	*A* 6.634 ¦ 5.316
	flentes ¦ et paribus curis vestigia *figunt*.	*A* 10.842 ¦ 6.159 (figit)
	tum *victum* ¦ in silvis ¦ bacas lapidosaque corna	*A* 1.214 ¦ 3.646 ¦ 3.649
	dant rami et vulsis pascunt radicibus herbae.	*A* 3.650
Gen. 4:1	Interea magnum sol circumvertitur annum:	*A* 3.284
	matri longa decem tulerunt fastidia menses,	*E* 4.61
	unde homines nati, durum genus. ¦ *inde* per artem	*G* 1.63 ¦ *A* 10.135 (quale)
	aut herbae campo apparent aut arbore frondes,	*G* 3.353
	inque novos soles audent se gramina tuto	*G* 2.332
	credere: ¦ et lentis uvam demittere ramis	*G* 2.333 ¦ 4.558
	instituunt ¦ udoque docent inolescere libro.	*A* 7.109 ¦ *G* 2.77
Gen. 4:3–8	tum, gemini fratres ¦ *adolent* dum altaria taedis,	*A* 7.670 ¦ 7.71 (adolet)
	alter in alterius ¦ praelato invidit honore—	*A* 2.667 (alterum) ¦ 5.541
	horresco referens—¦ consanguinitate propinquum	*A* 2.204 ¦ 2.86
	excipit incautum patriasque obtruncat ad aras	*A* 3.332
	sanguine foedantem quos ipse sacraverat ignis.	*A* 2.502
Gen. 6:5–8	tum genitor ¦ virus serpentibus addidit atris	*A* 3.102 etc. ¦ *G* 1.129
	mellaque decussit foliis ignemque removit	*G* 1.131
	praedarique lupos iussit pontumque moveri	*G* 1.130
	et passim rivis currentia vina repressit.	*G* 3.132
	mox et frumentis labor additus, ut mala culmos	*G* 1.150
	esset robigo ¦ et victum seges aegra *negaret*.	*G* 1.151 ¦ *A* 3.142 (negabat)
	[tunc alnos primum fluvii sensere cavatas]	*G* 1.136
	tum laqueis captare feras et fallere visco	*G* 1.139
	inventum, et ¦ duris urgens in rebus egestas	*G* 1.140 ¦ 1.146
	movit agros, curis acuens mortalia corda.	*G* 1.123
	deterior donec paulatim ac decolor aetas,	*A* 8.326
	ferrea progenies, duris caput extulit arvis	*G* 2.341
	et belli rabies et amor successit habendi.	*A* 8.327
	Iustitia excedens terris vestigia fecit.	*G* 2.474
	nec longum in medio tempus: ¦ furor iraque mentem	*A* 9.395 ¦ 2.316
	praecipitant: ¦ gaudent perfusi sanguine fratrum.	*A* 2.317 ¦ *G* 2.510
	condit opes alius defossoque incubat auro	*G* 2.507

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vs 278 circumvertitur **PLSC** : circumvolvitur *cett.* (*et codd. Vergilii*) *vs 291 post vs 293 in* π *vs 295b in* π *legitur*

His eyes stiffened, and he could neither hide in the darkness
any longer, nor understand familiar speech and answer.
Without delay they hurried onwards, as they had been ordered, moving
by quick steps. Side by side they walked along a darkness of paths,
hastened through the midway region and left their dwelling place
in tears, and with equal carefulness they placed their steps.
Then, in the forest, berries and stony cornel was provided
as food by the branches, and they subsisted on torn up herb roots.
Meanwhile the sun completed a long year in its orbit.
During ten months the mother was beset by the prolonged suffering
from which humans were born, a hardened race. Then, through technology,
herbs appeared in the field and foliage on the tree,
and the grass ventured to believe that it was safe until new suns arrived.
And they began to pluck off grapes from the pliant branches
and taught them to grow into the moist rind.
Then, as the twin brothers burned sacrificial offerings with torches,
one of them felt envy for the gift produced by the other—
I shiver when relating it!—his own kin by blood,
he caught him off guard and butchered him at his father's altar,
befouling with blood the fires that he himself had dedicated.
Then the Father gave poison to the malicious snakes
and shook off honey from the leaves and hid away fire,
and he ordered the wolves to hunt for prey and the sea to be in motion.
Gradually he stopped wine from flowing in streams.
Soon the toil of crops was added, as evil infestation
devoured the stalks and diseased harvests denied food.
[Then for the first time rivers touched hollowed alders],
Then capturing wild animals with snares and deceiving them with lime
was invented, and under these difficult circumstances urgent need
drove the fields, spurring on human hearts through troubles.
Then gradually the age turned weaker and paler
a race of iron held up its head above the hard earth,
and the madness of war and the desire for ownership followed.
Justice disappeared, leaving traces on earth.
Soon after, rage and anger overthrew
the mind. They rejoiced drenched in the blood of their brothers.
Others collected treasures and riches and brooded their hidden gold.

	nec doluit miserans inopem ¦ dextramque tetendit.	*G* 2.499 (aut) ¦ *A* 10.823
Gen. 6:8–8:22	Tum pater omnipotens ¦ graviter commotus *ab* alto	*A* 7.770 etc. ¦ 1.126 (et)
	aethere se mittit: ¦ tellurem *effundit* in undas	*A* 9.645 ¦ 12.204 (effundat)
	diluvio miscens caelumque in Tartara *solvit*.	*A* 12.205 (solvat)
	sternit agros, sternit sata laeta bovumque labores	*A* 2.305
	diluit; inplentur fossae et cava flumina crescunt;	*A* 1.326
	et genus omne neci pecudum dedit, omne ferarum.	*A* 3.480
	tum pietate gravem ac meritis ¦—mirabile dictu—,	*A* 1.151 ¦ 1.439 etc.
	qui fuit in *terris* et servantissimus aequi,	*A* 2.427 (Teucris)
	eripuit leto, ¦ *tantis* surgentibus undis,	*A* 2.134 (eripui, fateor) ¦ 6.354 (tan. navis)
	ut genus unde novae stirpis revocetur *haberet*.	*G* 4.282 (nec … habebit)
Gen. 9:1–17	Diluvio ex illo ¦ patribus dat iura vocatis	*A* 7.228 ¦ 5.758
	omnipotens: ¦ magnis agitant sub legibus aevum.	*A* 10.615 etc. ¦ *G* 4.154
Exod.	Quid memorem infandas caedes, quid facta tyranni	*A* 8.483
	nesciaque humanis precibus mansuescere corda,	*G* 4.470
	Aegyptum viresque Orientis et ultima ¦ bella	*A* 8.687 ¦ 8.675 etc.
	magnanimosque duces totiusque ordine gentis,	*G* 4.4
	quo cursu deserta petiverit ¦ et tribus et gens	*E* 6.80 ¦ *A* 7.708
	magna virum, ¦ meriti tanti non inmemor umquam,	*G* 2.174 ¦ *A* 9.256
	quique sacerdotes casti ¦ altaria iuxta,	*A* 6.661 ¦ 4.517
	quique pii vates ¦ pro libertate ruebant,	*A* 6.662 ¦ 8.648
	qui bello exciti reges, quae ¦ litore rubro	*A* 7.642 ¦ 8.686
	conplerint campos acies, ¦ quibus arserit armis	*A* 7.643 ¦ 7.644
	rex, genus egregium, ¦ magno *inflammante furore*,	*A* 7.213 ¦ 3.330 (inflammatus amore)
	agmen agens equitum et florentis aere catervas?	*A* 7.804
	cetera ¦ facta patrum ¦ pugnataque in ordine bella	*G* 3.3 etc. ¦ *A* 1.641 (fortia) ¦ 8.629
	praetereo atque aliis post me memoranda relinquo.	*G* 4.148
	Nunc ad te et tua magna, pater, consulta revertor.	*A* 11.410
	maius opus moveo: ¦ vatum praedicta priorum	*A* 7.45 ¦ 4.464
	adgredior, ¦ quamvis angusti terminus aevi	*A* 3.38 ¦ *G* 4.206
	accipiat, ¦ temptanda via est, qua me quoque possim	*A* 1.28 ¦ *G* 3.8
	tollere humo ¦ et nomen fama tot ferre per annos,	*G* 3.9 ¦ 3.47
	quod ¦ tua progenies ¦ caelo descendit ab alto,	*A* 2.179 etc. ¦ 2.250 etc. ¦ 8.423
	attulit et nobis aliquando optantibus aetas	*A* 8.200
	auxilium adventumque Dei, ¦ quom femina primum	*A* 8.201 ¦ 8.408

vs 340 quom *Schenkl* (*ex Vergilio*) : cum **Rb** : quum **V** : quos **PC** : quod **A** : quo *cett.*

They did not take pity on the poor, they did not extend their right hand.
Then the almighty Father, deeply troubled launched himself
from the high ether. He suffused the earth with water,
mingling it with a flood and made the sky collapse into Tartarus.
He covered the fields, covered the fertile orchards and washed away
the work of oxen. Trenches filled up and the deep rivers swelled
and all livestock species were handed over to death, and the wild animals.
But one man, who abounded in piety and excellence—wonderful to say!—,
who was most heedful of righteousness on earth,
God snatched him from death amidst the high waves,
in order that he would be able to bring back a race of a new stem.
After that flood the Almighty gave ordinances
to the summoned fathers, and they ruled over the generation by great laws.
Why should I recall infamous murders and the deeds of tyrants?
Hearts that knew not how to be softened by human prayers,
Egypt, the power of the East and wars in the outermost regions?
Greathearted commanders and the family-line of each people,
the path they made way through the desert, the tribe, the great people
of men (I am never forgetful of this great feat)?
The chaste priests beside their altars,
the pious prophets who perished for the sake of freedom,
the kings who were roused to war, what battle lines
filled the fields on the red beach, the weapons with which the king
struggled, an outstanding race, with great flaming rage,
leading cavalry troops and throngs blossoming with bronze?
The other deeds of the ancestors and their long series of battles,
I will pass over and leave for others to sing after me.

Now, Father, I turn to you once again and to your great plans.
I set a greater work in motion; I move towards the prophesies of ancient
seers. Even if the end of a brief life
receives it, I must try the path along which I will be able to lift
myself above the ground and carry the name in fame for so many years.
For your child descended from heaven on high,
and at last an age brought aid to us who wished for it
and the advent of God, when at first a woman,

	virginis os habitumque gerens ¦—mirabile dictu—	*A* 1.315 ¦ 1.439 etc.
	nec generis nostri puerum nec sanguinis *edit*,	*E* 8.45 (edunt)
	seraque terrifici cecinerunt omina vates	*A* 5.524
	adventare virum ¦ populis terrisque superbum	*A* 7.69 ¦ *A* 2.556
	semine ab aetherio, ¦ qui viribus occupet orbem.	*A* 7.281 ¦ 7.258
	[Imperium oceano famam qui terminet astris]	*A* 1.287
Matt. 2:2,	*Iamque* aderat promissa dies, ¦ quo tempore primum	*A* 9.107 (ergo) ¦ *G* 1.61
11; Luke	extulit os sacrum ¦ divinae stirpis *origo*	*A* 8.591 ¦ 5.711 (Acestes)
2:6–7	missus in imperium, ¦ *venitque* in corpore virtus	*A* 6.812 ¦ 5.344 (veniens)
	mixta deo: ¦ subiit cari genitoris imago.	*A* 7.661 ¦ 2.560
	haut mora, continuo ¦ caeli regione serena	*A* 5.368 (nec) ¦ 8.528
	stella facem ducens multa cum luce cucurrit.	*A* 2.694
	agnovere deum proceres ¦ cunctisque repente	*A* 9.659 ¦ 1.594
	muneribus *cumulant* ¦ et sanctum sidus *adorant*.	*A* 5.532 (cumulat) ¦ 2.700 (adorat)
	tum vero manifesta fides ¦ clarumque paternae	*A* 2.309 ¦ 12.225
	nomen erat virtutis: et *ipsi* ¦ agnoscere vultus	*A* 12.226 (ipse) ¦ 3.173
	flagrantisque dei ¦ divini signa decoris.	*A* 1.710 ¦ 5.647
Matt. 2:3	protinus ad regem ¦ *magno* fervore ¦ ruentum	*A* 4.196 ¦ 10.578 (tanto) ¦ 11.886
	fama volat ¦ variisque *acuit* rumoribus iras	*A* 3.121 etc. ¦ 9.464 (acuunt)
	inceditque animum ¦ matrisque adlabitur auris.	*A* 4.197 (etc.) ¦ 9.474
	illa dolos dirumque nefas ¦ haut nescia rerum	*A* 4.563 ¦ 12.227
	praesensit motusque excepit prima futuros.	*A* 4.297
	praescia venturi ¦ furtim mandarat alendum,	*A* 6.66 ¦ 3.50
	dum curae ambiguae, dum ¦ mens exaestuat ira.	*A* 8.580 ¦ 9.798
Matt.	at rex sollicitus ¦ stirpem et genus omne futurum	*A* 7.81 ¦ 4.622
2:16–18	praecipitare *iubet* subiectisque urere flammis,	*A* 2.37 (iubent)
	multa movens, ¦ mittique viros qui certa reportent.	*A* 3.34 etc. ¦ 9.193
	haut secus ac iussi faciunt ¦ rapidisque feruntur	*A* 3.236 ¦ 7.156
	passibus ¦ et ¦ *magnis* urbem terroribus inplent.	*A* 7.157 [1.271 etc. ¦ 11.448 (magnisque)
	continuo auditae voces vagitus et ingens	*A* 6.426
	infantumque animae flentes: ¦ ante ora parentum	*A* 6.427 ¦ 5.553
	corpora natorum ¦ sternuntur ¦ limine primo.	*A* 2.214 ¦ 2.364 ¦ 2.485 etc.
Matt.	at mater ¦ gemitu non frustra exterrita tanto,	*G* 4.333 ¦ 4.353
2:13–14;	*ipsa* sinu prae se portans, ¦ turbante tumultu,	*A* 11.544 (ipse) ¦ 6.857 etc.
Luke 2:7	infantem fugiens ¦ plena ad praesaepia *reddit*.	*A* 11.541 ¦ *G* 3.495 (reddunt)

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vs 345b in **CV** *legitur Probae*   *vs 358* variisque *Schenkl dubitanter* (*ex Vergilio*) : magnisque *codd.*

who wore the guise and appearance of a maiden—wonderful to relate!—
gave birth to a boy who was neither of our race nor of our blood.
Frightful prophets had sung of all these late signs,
that a man with power over the earth and men would arrive
from ethereal seed and take possession of the world through his strength,
[who will make Ocean the limit of his power, and the stars that of his fame.]

The promised day had now arrived, the time when
the origin of the divine race first revealed its sacred face;
sent to rule, virtue mixed with God
arrived in bodily form; an image of the beloved Father came down.
Without delay and at once, in the calm region of the sky
a star bringing a wide-shining torch ran onwards.
The noble princes recognized God and suddenly
they formed piles of various gifts and worshiped the holy star.
Then indeed faith in him was made manifest and the name of his paternal
virtue became clear; and they recognized the face
and the signs of God's radiant divine beauty.
Immediately a rumor flew headlong to he king
with great vehemence, stirred anger in him with various hearsays
and fired up his spirit, and it also reached the ears of the mother.
She, who was not ignorant of the cruelty and atrocities,
knew of it beforehand and avoided the future turmoil first of all.
Aware of the future, she sent away her son in secret to be cared for,
as long as uncertainty prevailed and the mind was boiling with rage.
But in his anxiety the king ordered that the people, he whole future race
should be destroyed and burned by flames from below,
bringing much commotion, and he sent out reliable informers.
They did just as they had been ordered. They went by quick
steps and filled the city with great horror.
Throughout, voices were heard and great wailing,
the crying souls of infants; before their parents' eyes
the bodies of children were strewn over the threshold.
But the mother, who was frightened by all the crying—not in vain—
carried her child in her bosom through this raging disorder
and fled to a well-stocked stable.

	hic natum ¦ angusti subter fastigia tecti	*A* 1.407 (quid) ¦ 8.366
	nutribat teneris inmulgens ubera labris.	*A* 11.572
	hic tibi prima, puer, ¦ fundent cunabula flores,	*E* 4.18 (ac) ¦ 4.23
	mixtaque ridenti ¦ passim cum baccare tellus	*E* 4.20 ¦ 4.19
	molli paulatim ¦ colocasia fundet acantho.	*E* 4.28 ¦ 4.20
	Et iam finis erat ¦ perfecto temporis orbe.	*A* 1.223 ¦ 6.745
Matt. 2:22	ut primum cessit furor et rabida ora quierunt,	*A* 6.102
	ante annos animumque gerens ¦ caelestis origo	*A* 9.311 ¦ 6.730
	per medias urbes *graditur* ¦ populosque propinquos.	*A* 7.384 (agitur) ¦ 3.502
Luke 2:46–48	illum omnis tectis agrisque effusa iuventus	*A* 7.812 (illam)
	attonitis inhians animis ¦ prospectat euntem,	*A* 7.814 ¦ 7.813
	turbaque miratur matrum: ¦ "qui spiritus illi,	*A* 7.813 ¦ 5.648
	qui vultus vocisque sonus vel gressus eunti est!"	*A* 5.649
Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:9; Luke 3.16; John 1:15	Continuo vates ¦—namque is certissimus auctor—	*A* 7.68 ¦ 1.432
	ut procul egelido secretum flumine vidit,	*A* 8.610
	"tempus", ait, "deus, ecce, deus, cui ¦ maxima rerum	*A* 6.46 ¦ 7.602
	verborumque fides. ¦ tu nunc eris alter ab illo,	*A* 9.280 ¦ *E* 5.49
	fortunate puer, ¦ caeli cui sidera parent.	*E* 5.49 ¦ *A* 10.176
	sic equidem ducebam animo rebarque futurum:	*A* 6.690
	expectate venis, ¦ spes et solacia nostri".	*A* 2.283 ¦ 8.514
	haec ubi dicta dedit, ¦ fluvio mersare salubri	*A* 2.790 etc. ¦ *G* 1.272
	accepit venientem ac mollibus extulit undis:	*A* 9.817
	exultantque vada *ac* ¦ subito commota columba	*A* 3.557 (atque) ¦ *A* 5.213
	devolat et supra caput astitit. ¦ inde repente	*A* 4.702 ¦ 8.238
	radit iter liquidum celeris neque commovet alas.	*A* 5.217
Mark 1:5	huc omnis turba ad ripas effusa ruebat	*A* 6.305
	certatim largos umeris infundere rores.	*G* 1.385
Mark. 1:11	tum genitor natum dictis ¦ compellat amicis:	*A* 10.466 ¦ 2.372
	"nate, meae vires, mea magna potentia, solus	*A* 1.664
	et praedulce decus ¦ magnum rediture parenti,	*A* 11.155 ¦ 10.507
	a te principium, tibi *desinet.* ¦ accipe, testor,	*E* 8.11 (desinam) ¦ *A* 11.559
	o mea progenies: ¦ qua sol utrumque recurrens	*A* 7.97 ¦ 7.100
	aspicit Oceanum, ¦ perfecto laetus honore	*A* 7.101 ¦ 3.178
	omnia sub pedibus ¦ vertique regique *videbis.*	*A* 7.100 ¦ 7.101 (videbunt)
	tu regere imperio populos, ¦ matresque virosque,	*A* 6.851 ¦ 2.797
	iam pridem resides animos desuetaque corda	*A* 1.722
	ignarosque viae me cum miseratus ¦ inertes	*G* 1.41 ¦ *E* 8.24

vs 387 eunti est : eunti *codd. Vergilii*

Here, under the roof of a lowly house
she nourished her son, giving milk from her breasts to his soft lips.
Here, child, your first cradle would scatter flowers for you
and the earth would scatter here and there Egyptian lilies
mixed with smiling cyclamen, gradually with soft acanthus.
Now the end had come and the cycle of time was completed.
Once the madness subsided and raging lips abated
the heavenly origin, with a spirit surpassing his age,
walked through the cities and the neighboring peoples.
Every young person poured forth from the houses and fields.
They were stunned in their hearts and stood gaping at his steps.
A crowd of mothers were astonished: "Just look at his spirit,
his face, the sound of his voice, his steps!"
The prophet—and he was the most secure authority—
as he saw him standing alone, from afar in the cold river,
immediately said: "It is time! God, behold, God, to whom the greatest
faith belongs in matters and words. You will now be the one next to him,
blessed boy, whom the stars in heaven obey.
Thus I believed that it would turn out in my mind and I predicted the future.
You come, awaited since long, our hope and consolation."
When he had uttered these words he invited him
to be submerged in the salubrious river, and brought him into the mild water.
The waves rejoiced and suddenly a dove was roused, flew down
and stayed above his head. Thereafter, it suddenly
brushed along its clear path, quickly but without moving its wings.
Now the whole crowd rushed down in a stream to the riverbanks
to eagerly splash the spray over their shoulders.
Then the Father addresses the Son with kind words:
"My Son, you alone are my strength and my great power,
you who will give in return a great and delightful honor to your father.
From you was the beginning, and with you it will end. Listen, my child,
I promise you: everything that the sun overlooks during its journey between
the two oceans, you will happily see, with full honor,
turned under your feet and ruled.
You will rule the peoples with power. Feel compassion, as I do,
for mothers and men whose souls long been in hibernation and whose
hearts have become unaccustomed. Come to the aid of the sluggish people

	adgredere et votis iam nunc adsuesce vocari”.	*G* 1.42 (ingredere)
	Dixerat. ille patris magni parere parabat	*A* 4.238
	imperio, ¦ instans operi regnisque futuris.	*A* 4.439 ¦ 1.504
	Heu pietas, heu prisca fides! ¦ quas dicere grates	*A* 6.878 ¦ 11.508
	incipiam, ¦ si parva licet componere magnis?	*A* 2.13 ¦ *G* 4.176
	nec mihi iam patriam antiquam spes ulla videndi	*A* 2.137
	nec spes libertatis erat nec cura ¦ salutis.	*E* 1.32 ¦ *A* 2.387 etc.
	hic mihi responsum primus dedit ille petenti,	*E* 1.44
	concretam exemit labem purumque reliquit	*A* 6.746
	aetherium sensum ¦ meque in mea regna remisit.	*A* 6.747 ¦ 2.543
	illum ego per flammas, ¦ agerem si Syrtibus exul,	*A* 6.110 ¦ 5.51
	per varios casus, per ¦ mille sequentia tela,	*A* 1.204 ¦ 6.110
	quo res cumque cadent, unum ¦ pro nomine tanto	*A* 2.709 ¦ 8.472
	exsequerer strueremque suis altaria donis.	*A* 5.54
	huius in adventum ¦ tantarum in *munera* laudum.	*A* 6.798 ¦ 8.273 (munere)
	[Namque erit ille mihi semper deus, illius aram 426b	*E* 1.7
	cuncti ¦ obtestemur veniamque oremus ab ipso] 426c	*A* 5.70 ¦ 11.358
	ipsi laetitia voces ad sidera iactant	*E* 5.62
	intonsi montes: ¦ respondent omnia valles.	*E* 5.63 ¦ 10.8 (silvae)
Matt. 4:1–11; Luke 4:1–13	Tempore non alio ¦—magnum et memorabile nomen—	*G* 3.245 etc. ¦ *A* 4.94
	serpentis furiale malum ¦ meminisse necesse est.	*A* 7.375 ¦ *A* 6.514
	ausus quin etiam ¦—fama est obscurior annis—	*A* 2.768 ¦ 7.205
	conpellare virum et ¦ veniendi poscere causas.	*A* 2.280 ¦ 1.414
	hunc ubi tendentem adversum per gramina vidit,	*A* 6.684 (isque)
	substitit infremuitque ferox ¦ dominumque potentem	*A* 10.711 ¦ 6.621
	saucius *ac* serpens ¦ adfatur voce superba:	*A* 11.753 ¦ 7.544
	“verane te facies, verus mihi nuntius adfers?	*A* 3.310
	qui genus? unde domo, ¦ qui nostra ad *limina* tendis?	*A* 8.114 ¦ 6.388 (flumina)
	fare age, quid venias; ¦ nam te dare iura loquuntur.	*A* 6.389 ¦ 1.731
	aut quis te, iuvenum confidentissime, nostras	*A* 4.445
	iussit adire domus ¦ pacique inponere morem?	*G* 4.446 ¦ *A* 6.852
	non equidem invideo, miror magis: ¦ *accipe* porro,	*E* 1.11 ¦ *A* 9.190 (percipe)
	quid dubitem et quae nunc animo sententia surgat.	*A* 9.191
	est domus alta: ¦ voca zephyros et labere pinnis	*A* 10.526 ¦ 4.223
	ardua tecta *petens*, ¦ ausus *te* credere caelo,	*A* 7.512 (petit) ¦ 6.15 (se)
	si modo quem *memoras* pater est, ¦ cui sidera parent”.	*G* 4.323 (perhibes) ¦ *A* 10.176
	olli subridens sedato pectore ¦ fatur	*A* 9.740 ¦ 10.459 etc.

vs 426b–c in π *legitur*

who are ignorant of the way, and get used to being called for in prayers".
These were his words. He prepared to obey his great father's
order, pursuing the task and the future kingdom.
Oh piety! Oh ancient faith! What thanks
shall I begin to say, if I may compare small things with great?
Then I had neither any hope of seeing my ancient fatherland
nor hope of freedom nor care for salvation.
Here first he answered my prayers
and set me free from the clotted stain, left the ethereal intelligence
pure and sent me back to my kingdom.
Him alone I would follow through the fire, if I were exiled to the Quicksands,
I would face many sufferings and showers of a thousand arrows.
Whatever happens, I would follow him alone for the sake
of the mighty name, build altars and fill them with offerings to him;
at his advent, as a reward for his great glory,
426b [—for he will always be my God, let us all
426c beseech his altar, and ask him for mercy—]
the wooded mountains raise their voices in joy to the stars,
and the valleys answer to everything.
At this very time—a great and memorable name—
we must recall the furious wickedness of the snake.
For he dared (even if his fame has become more obscure with the years)
to address this man and ask why he had come.
When he saw him walking across the grass
he stopped and hissed wildly, and the distempered snake spoke
with an arrogant voice to the mighty Lord:
"Is this your true appearance, are you a true messenger to me?
What is your race? From what home do you come to my lands?
Tell me why you come here. For they say that you give ordinances.
Or who ordered you, audacious young man,
to go to my home and establish peace?
I am not envious, but rather I am surprised. Now, listen to
why I am in doubt and what decision is emerging in my mind.
Here is a high building. Call on the west winds and glide through the air on wings
flying towards the high roofs, daring to entrust yourself to the sky
given that your father is who you say it is, he whom the stars obey".
Smiling and calmly he answered him,

	haut vatum ignarus venturique inscius aevi:	*A* 8.627
	“dissimulare etiam sperasti, perfide ¦ serpens?	*A* 4.305 ¦ 5.91 etc.
	ne dubita; nam vera vides. ¦ opta ardua pinnis	*A* 3.316 ¦ 12.892
	astra sequi clausumque cava te condere terra.	*A* 12.893
	quo periture ruis maioraque viribus audes?	*A* 10.811
	cede deo, ¦ toto proiectus corpore terrae”.	*A* 5.467 ¦ 11.87
	nec plura his. ille admirans venerabile donum	*A* 6.408
	fronte premit terram ¦ et spumas agit ore cruento	*A* 10.349 ¦ *G* 3.203
	contentusque fuga ¦ caecis se *inmiscuit* umbris.	*A* 11.815 ¦ 7.619 (condidit; cf. 4.570)
Matt.	Interea ¦ volitans ¦ magnas it fama per urbes.	*A* 1.124 etc. ¦ 12.328 ¦ 4.173
4:23–25; Mark	convenere viri: ¦ mens omnibus una sequendi	*A* 5.490 ¦ 10.182
3:7–8; Luke	in quascumque *velit* pelago deducere terras.	*A* 2.800 (velim)
6:17	multi praeterea, quos fama obscura recondit,	*A* 5.302
	concurrunt ¦ fremitu denso stipantque frequentes,	*A* 10.361 ¦ *G* 4.216
	[conveniunt ¦ vitamque volunt pro laude pacisci]	*A* 1.361 etc. ¦ 5.230
	exultantque animis; ¦ medium nam plurima turba	*A* 11.491 (exultatque) ¦ 6.667
	hunc habet atque umeris extantem suspicit altis.	*A* 6.668
	postquam altos ventum in montes, ¦ aeterna potestas	*A* 4.151 ¦ 10.18
	iura dabat legesque viris, ¦ secreta parentis,	*A* 1.507 ¦ 2.299
	spemque dedit dubiae menti ¦ curasque resolvit.	*A* 4.55 ¦ *G* 1.302
	conspicit ecce alios dextra laevaque ¦ frequentis.	*A* 6.656 ¦ *G* 3.394
Matt. 5–7;	quos ubi confertos audere in proelia *vidit*,	*A* 2.347 (vidi)
Luke	incipit et dictis divinum aspirat amorem:	*A* 8.373
6:17–49	“discite iustitiam moniti, ¦ succurrite fessis	*A* 6.620 ¦ 11.335
	pro se quisque, viri, ¦ quae cuique est copia, laeti	*A* 5.501 etc. ¦ 5.100
	communemque vocate deum. ¦ meliora sequamur	*A* 8.275 ¦ 3.188
	quoque vocat vertamus iter. ¦ via prima salutis	*A* 5.23 ¦ 6.96
	intemerata fides ¦ et mens sibi conscia recti.	*A* 2.143 ¦ 1.604
	vobis parta quies ¦ perfecto temporis orbe.	*A* 3.495 ¦ 6.745
	nam qui divitiis soli incubuere repertis	*A* 6.610 (aut)
	nec partem posuere suis, ¦ dum vita *maneret*,	*A* 6.611 ¦ 6.608 (manebat)
	pulsatusve parens et fraus innexa clienti,	*A* 6.609
	tum, cum frigida mors anima seduxerit artus,	*A* 4.385 (et)
	inclusi poenam expectant, ¦ quae maxima turba est,	*A* 6.614 ¦ 6.611
	infernisque *cient* tenebris ¦ veterumque malorum	*A* 7.325 (ciet) ¦ 6.739
	supplicia expendunt. ¦ aliis sub gurgite vasto	*A* 6.740 ¦ 6.741

vs 454 cruentas *Schenkl* (*et codd. Verg.*) *vs 461–462 post 466 in codd.*

well aware of the prophets and informed about the what would come to pass:
“Was it your hope to disguise yourself, perfidious snake?
Do not doubt it! What you see is true. Pray that you might fly with wings
up to the high stars or hide under the hollow earth!
Condemned man, where are you rushing, attempting what lies beyond your powers?
Yield to God, stretched out on the ground with all of your body”
No more was said, and he marveled at the venerable gift
pressed the ground with his forehead, foaming from his bloody mouth,
happy to escape he mingled with dark shadows.
In the meantime, rumor came flying through the great cities.
Men gathered and all agreed to follow him
over the sea, wherever he wanted to take them.
Many others, whom a shrouded rumor have hidden away,
came together with a dense noise, gathered thickly,
460b [congregated, willing to give their life for glory,]
and rejoiced in their spirits. For he stood in the middle
of the numerous crowds, and everyone looked up on him with his mighty shoulders.
After they had arrived in the high mountains, the eternal power
gave ordinances and laws to men, his Father’s mysteries,
and gave hope to a doubting mind and dispelled worries.
Behold! He caught sight of others coming close on the right and left.
When he saw them gathered there ready for battle,
he began and inspired divine love through words:
“Take warning and learn justice! May each one of you for his part,
men, gladly come to the rescue of the exhausted according to your capacity,
and call on our common God. Let us follow what is better
and turn our path wherever he orders. The first road to salvation
is unblemished faith and a mind that knows what is right.
When the great circle of time is completed, rest awaits you
For those who alone brooded the riches they had found
and did not share them with friends while still alive,
the parent beaten and trickery and defrauding of clients,
these will, after cold death have parted their limbs from the soul,
be imprisoned and face punishment, and this is the larger crowd.
They will call out in the shadows below, and pay the price
for their previous crimes. For some their unfulfilled sin

	infectum eluitur scelus aut exuritur igni.	*A* 6.742
	turbidus hic caeno vastaque voragine gurges	*A* 6.296
	aestuat atque ¦ imo barathri ¦ eructat harenam.	*A* 6.297 ¦ 3.421 ¦ 6.297
	hinc exaudiri gemitus et saeva sonare	*A* 6.557
	verbera, tum stridor ferri tractaeque catenae,	*A* 6.558
	semper et *obducta* densantur nocte tenebrae.	*G* 1.248 (obtenta)
	praeterea ¦ quae dicam animis advertite vestris.	*A* 1.49 etc. ¦ 2.712
	non ego vos posthac ¦ *caesis* de more iuvencis	*E* 1.75 ¦ *A* 3.369 (caesis primum)
	religione patrum ¦ truncis et *robore natas*	*A* 2.715 / 8.598 ¦ 8.315 (duro robore nata)
	mortalive manu ¦ effigies et templa tueri	*A* 9.95 (mortaline) ¦ 7.443
	audiam: et haec ¦ repetens iterumque iterumque monebo:	*A* 4.387 ¦ 3.436
	sed periisse semel satis est, ¦ natumque patremque	*A* 9.140 ¦ 4.605
	profuerit meminisse magis, ¦ si credere dignum est.	*G* 1.451 ¦ *A* 6.173
Matt. 24:29–31; Mark 13:24–27; Luke 21:25–28	sed fugit interea, fugit inreparabile tempus,	*G* 3.284
	flammarumque ¦ dies et vis inimica propinquat".	*G* 1.473 ¦ *A* 12.150
	adtonitis haesere animis: ¦ nec plura moratus	*A* 5.529
	hic aliud maius miseris ¦ mortalibus aegris	*A* 2.199 ¦ 2.268 etc.
	iudicium ¦ canit—et tristis denuntiat iras—	*A* 1.27 ¦ 3.366
	venturum excidio ¦ et vasta convulsa ruina	*A* 1.22 ¦ 3.414
	omnia tum pariter ¦ rutilo immiscerier igni	*G* 1.455 ¦ 1.454
	palantesque polo stellas ¦ caelique *ruinam*.	*A* 9.21 ¦ 1.129 (ruina)
	tum vero tremefacta novus per pectora cunctis	*A* 2.228
	insinuat pavor, ¦ et taciti ventura videbant.	*A* 2.229 ¦ 2.125
Matt. 19:16–22; Mark 10.17–22; Luke 18.18–23	*Haec* super adventu ¦ cum multa horrenda moneret,	*A* 7.344 (quam) ¦ 3.712
	ora puer prima signans intonsa iuventa,	*A* 9.181
	dives opum, ¦ studiis *florens* ignobilis oti—	*G* 2.465 ¦ 4.564 (florentem)
	quinque greges illi balantum, quina redibant	*A* 7.538
	armenta, et ¦ dapibus mensas onerabat inemptis—	*A* 7.539 ¦ 4.133
	continuo ¦ alacris palmas utrasque tetendit	*A* 3.196 ¦ 6.685
	et genua amplectens ¦ sic ore effatus amico est:	*A* 10.523 ¦ 3.463
	"o decus, o famae merito pars maxima nostrae,	*G* 2.40
	ad te confugio et supplex tua numina posco.	*A* 1.666
	omnia praecepi atque animo mecum ante peregi.	*A* 6.105
	eripe me his, invicte, malis. ¦ quid denique restat,	*A* 6.365 ¦ 2.70
	quidve sequens tantos possim superare labores?	*A* 3.368
	accipe daque fidem: ¦ mihi iussa capessere fas est."	*A* 8.150 ¦ 1.77

vs 490 natas *Aldus Manutius* : nata *codd.* (*et codd. Verg.*)

will be washed away in a huge vortex, or burned by fire.
This whirlpool is thick with clay and boils in a huge chasm
and casts up sand from the depths.
From here you hear the sound of lamentation and cruel
beatings, shrieking iron and dragging of chains,
and the shadows are always made thick by the widespread night.
Moreover, listen with your hearts to what I will say now.
Let me no more hear that you, with young bulls slaughtered
in accordance with your ancestral rites, observe images,
born from trees and oak or carved by mortal hand, and temples.
Time and time again, I will repeat this call.
But perishing once is enough; it will have been of greater use
to remember the Son and the Father, if it is worthy to believe it.
But now it flies, yes, the irreversible time flies,
the day of flames and the enemy force approaches."
They clung to his words with astonished minds, and without delay
he sang out another greater sentence over the reluctant,
wretched mortals—and proclaimed gloomy anger—
that would come with death, and likewise, with vast devastation, everything
would be shaken and equally mingle with shimmering fire
the stars leaving the sky and heaven's destruction.
Then a new fear entered the trembling hearts
of each one of them, and silently they beheld the future.

One he instructed them about these many horrific things at the arrival,
a boy who in his unshaven face showed the first signs of manhood,
rich in wealth, blossoming in endeavors of ignoble leisure.
Five flocks of bleaters he had and five herds of cattle returned to
their shelter, and he decked his table with generous feasts.

Immediately he stretched out his eager hands
embraced his knees, and spoke thus with friendly lips:
"O Glory, rightfully the greatest part of our reputation,
I take refuge to you, and humbly beseech your divinity.
I have already seen and experienced everything in my thoughts.
Release me from these evils, you undefeated. For what remains,
or how can I overcome the difficult hardships that await?
Take my word and give me yours: It's for me to carry out the order."

atque huic responsum paucis ita reddidit heros:	*A* 6.672
“o praestans animi iuvenis, ¦ absiste precando,	*A* 12.19 ¦ 8.403
nec te paeniteat: ¦ nihil o tibi amice relictum.	*E* 10.17 ¦ *A* 6.509
hoc etiam his addam, tua si mihi certa voluntas:	*A* 7.548
disce, puer, ¦ contemnere opes et te quoque dignum	*A* 12.435 ¦ 8.364
finge deo, ¦ et quae sit poteris cognoscere virtus.	*A* 8.365 ¦ *E* 4.27
da dextram misero et ¦ fratrem ne desere frater.	*A* 6.370 ¦ 10.600
si iungi hospitio properat, ¦ coniunge volentem.	*A* 7.264 ¦ 5.712
casta pudicitiam servet domus. ¦ en age segnes	*G* 2.524 (servat) ¦ 3.42
rumpe moras ¦ rebusque veni non asper egenis.”	*G* 3.43 ¦ *A* 8.365
dixerat haec. ¦ ille ¦ in verbo vestigia torsit	*A* 5.84 ¦ 6.408 etc. ¦ 6.547
tristior, ¦ ora modis adtollens pallida miris,	*A* 1.228 / *G* 4.235 ¦ *A* 1.354
multa gemens, ¦ seque ex oculis avertit et aufert.	*A* 12.886 ¦ 4.389
[Matt. 4:18–22; 8:23–27; 14:22–33; Mark 4:35–41; Mark 6:45–51; Luke 8:22–25; Luke 5:1–11; John 6:16–21] Inde ubi prima fides pelago, ¦ tranquilla per alta	*A* 3.69 ¦ 2.203
deducunt socii navis ¦ atque ¦ arte magistra	*A* 3.71 ¦ 1.175 etc. ¦ 8.442
hic alius latum funda transverberat amnem	*G* 1.141 (atque; iam verberat, cf. *A* 10.336)
alta petens, pelagoque alius trahit umida lina.	*G* 1.142
postquam altum tenuere rates nec iam amplius ullae	*A* 3.192
occurrunt terrae, ¦ crebris micat ignibus aether,	*A* 3.193 (apparent) ¦ 1.90
eripiunt subito nubes caelumque diemque,	*A* 1.88
consurgunt venti et ¦ fluctus ad sidera tollunt.	*A* 5.20 (atque) ¦ 1.103 (fluctusque; tollit)
at sociis subita gelidus formidine sanguis	*A* 3.259
diriguit: cecidere animi ¦ cunctique repente	*A* 3.260 ¦ 1.594 (cunctisque)
pontum adspectabant flentes ¦—vox omnibus una—	*A* 5.615 ¦ 5.616
spemque metumque inter dubii, seu vivere credant	*A* 1.218
sive extrema pati, ¦ leti discrimine parvo,	*A* 1.219 ¦ 3.685
qualia multa mari nautae patiuntur in alto.	*A* 7.200
ecce deus ¦ magno misceri murmure pontum	*A* 5.854 ¦ 1.124
emissamque hiemem sensit, ¦ cui summa potestas.	*A* 1.125 ¦ 10.100 (prima)
par levibus ventis ¦ et fulminis ocior alis	*A* 6.702 ¦ 5.319
prona petit maria et pelago decurrit aperto:	*A* 5.212
nec longo distat cursu ¦ praeeunte carina.	*A* 3.116 (distant) ¦ *A* 5.186
agnoscunt longe regem ¦ dextramque potentem	*A* 10.224 ¦ 7.234
nudati socii ¦ et magno clamore ¦ salutant.	*A* 3.282 ¦ 5.207 ¦ 3.524
postquam altos tetigit fluctus et ad aequora venit,	*A* 3.662
id vero horrendum ac visu mirabile ferri:	*A* 7.78

vs 520 relictum est **PbChCV** *vs 531–580 hoc ordine* **V** : *531–561 post 562–580 codd.*

Then the hero answered him with these few words:
"O outstandingly brave young man, give up your pleading.
Do not let it grieve you. You have overlooked nothing, my friend.
To this I would add, if your will for me is certain:
Boy, learn to despise riches, and make yourself worthy
of God; and then you will be able to understand what virtue is.
Reach out your hand to the unfortunate, a brother should not forsake
a brother. Accept him if he wants to be your guest-friend.
A chaste home should honor modesty. Now, break your lingering
delays and meet those who are in need without harshness."
Thus he spoke, and the boy turned his steps while his voice was still speaking
and became gloomier. His face turned strangely pale
and under heavy lament, he turned away and withdrew from their sight.
From the first time when trust was first put to the sea, the companions
pulled ships out on the quiet depths, and with art as his teacher
one man whipped the wide river with his net,
setting out for the deep, another hauled up wet cords out of the sea.
When the raft had reached the deep sea and land was no longer
in sight, the ether glimmered with dense lights,
suddenly then clouds snatched away heaven and daylight,
winds arose and lifted the waves to the stars.
The blood of the crew froze to ice with sudden fear,
their spirits fell and suddenly all of them beheld
the sea with teared eyes, they all shared one voice.
They shifted between hope and fear, whether they would survive
or suffer their end. Death was very close.
Sailors suffer many such dangers on the deep seas.
Behold! God noticed that the sea had been mixed with a great noise
and that the storm had broken loose—he who has the highest power.
Like light winds and faster than lightning he flew out towards
the steep waters and ran over the open sea.
He was not far from the moving keel.
The naked companions recognized their king from afar
and his mighty hand, and they greeted him with a great cry.
After he had touched the deep waves and come out on the water
—truly a terrifying and amazing sight to behold—

	subsidunt undae, ¦ remo ut luctamen abesset,	*A* 5.820 ¦ 8.89
	collectasque fugat nubes ¦ graditurque per aequor	*A* 1.143 ¦ 3.664
	iam medium necdum fluctu latera ardua tinxit.	*A* 3.665
	at media socios incedens nave per ipsos	*A* 5.188
	ipse gubernaclo rector subit, ipse magister.	*A* 5.176
	intremuit malus, ¦ gemuit sub pondere cumba,	*A* 5.505 ¦ *A* 6.413
	vela cadunt, ¦ puppique deus consedit in alta:	*A* 3.207 ¦ *A* 5.841
	et tandem laeti notae advertuntur harenae.	*A* 5.34
Matt. 21:7–11; Mark 11:7–10; Luke 19:35–38; John 12:13–15	Tunc etiam ¦ tardi costas agitator aselli	*A* 2.246 ¦ *G* 1.273
	insedit nimbo effulgens: ¦ cui plurima circum	*A* 2.616 ¦ 5.250 (quam)
	matres atque viri, ¦ pueri ¦ velamina nota	*G* 4.475 / *A* 6.306 ¦ *G* 4.476 / *A* 6.307 ¦ *A* 6.221
	subiciunt ¦ funemque manu contingere gaudent.	*A* 2.236 etc. ¦ *A* 2.239
Matt. 21:12–13; Mark 11:15–18; Luke 19:45–46	iamque propinquabant portis ¦ templumque vetustum	*A* 11.621 ¦ 2.713
	antiqua e cedro ¦ centum sublime columnis	*A* 7.178 ¦ 7.170
	ingreditur ¦ magna medius comitante caterva.	*A* 6.157 ¦ 5.76
	horrendum silvis ¦ hoc illis curia templum,	*A* 7.172 ¦ 7.174
	hae sacrae sedes, ¦ miro quod honore colebant.	*A* 7.175 ¦ 4.458 (colebat)
	namque sub ingenti lustrat dum singula templo,	*A* 1.453
	horrescit visu subito ¦ insonuitque flagello	*A* 6.710 ¦ 5.579
	significatque manu et magno simul ¦ intonat ore:	*A* 12.692 ¦ 6.607
	"quae scelerum facies, ¦ quaeve ¦ aera micantia cerno	*A* 6.560 ¦ 1.539 ¦ 2.734
	Caesaris et nomen? ¦ quae mentem insania mutat?	*G* 3.47 ¦ *A* 4.595 / 12.37
	hae nobis propriae sedes, ¦ hic ¦ tempore certo	*A* 3.167 ¦ *G* 2.4 etc. ¦ 4.100
	perpetuis soliti patrum considere mensis."	*A* 7.176 (patres)
	obstipuere animis gelidusque per ima cucurrit	*A* 2.120 (animi)
	ossa tremor, ¦ mensasque metu liquere priores.	*A* 2.121 ¦ 3.213
Matt. 26:20–29; Mark 14:17–25; Luke 22:14; John 13:1–32	Devexo interea propior fit Vesper Olympo.	*A* 8.280
	[/sol ruit interea et montes umbrantur opaci.]	*A* 3.508
	tum victu revocant vires fusique per herbam	*A* 1.214
	et dapibus mensas onerant et pocula ponunt.	*A* 1.706 (onerent; ponant)
	postquam prima quies epulis mensaeque remotae,	*A* 1.723
	ipse inter primos ¦ genitori instaurat honores,	*A* 2.479 ¦ 5.94
	suspiciens caelum. ¦ tum facta silentia linguis.	*A* 12.196 ¦ 11.241
	dat manibus fruges ¦ dulcesque a fontibus undas	*A* 12.173 (dant) ¦ *G* 2.243 (undae)
	implevitque mero pateram ¦ ritusque sacrorum	*A* 1.729 ¦ 12.836

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vs 580b in **πRb** *legitur*

the waves descended, and although effort of oars were lacking
he chased away the gathered clouds and walked now in the water's midst,
yet the wave did not moisten his high sides.
He got up among the companions in the middle of the ship
and took the rudder himself, became the helmsman of the ship.
The mast trembled and the boat groaned under the weight,
the sails fell, and God seated himself in the high stern,
and at last he happily saw familiar sand.

At this time, he came mounted on a slow donkey's back,
flowing with radiance. All around him
were mothers, men and children who laid a great many
of their favorite garments below him and rejoiced in touching the ropes.
Now they were approaching the gates and an ancient temple
made of age-old cedar, lofty with a hundred columns.
He entered it, accompanied by a large crowd.
Terrifying amidst forests this was their temple and assembly,
their sacred house, which were revered with incredible reverence.
But when he inspected every part of the massive temple,
he was horrified by a sudden sight and his whip resounded.
He pointed with his hand and shouted with his great voice:
"What is this sight of crimes? What gleaming bronze do I see
and Caesar's name? What madness has perverted your minds?
This is my own home. Here, at a certain time
they would sit at the communal tables of the fathers."
They were astonished in their spirits and chilling terror ran through
their innermost bones, and the foremen left their tables in fear.
Meanwhile, Vesper approached the steep Olympus.
[the sun went down and the dark mountains were covered with shadows].
Then they restored their strength with food, and lying in the grass
they decked tables with festive meals and cups.
When first part of the meal was over and the tables cleared,
he himself was among the first to initiate the celebrations of his father,
gazing at the sky. Then every tongue fell silent.
He put bread in their hands and sweet water from fountains,
and filled a bowl with wine, and taught them the sacred rites,

	edocet ¦ inmiscetque preces ¦ ac talia fatur:	*A* 10.152 ¦ 10.153 ¦ 3.485 etc.
	"audite, o proceres," ait "et spes discite vestras.	*A* 3.103
	nemo ex hoc numero mihi non donatus abibit,	*A* 5.305
	promissisque patris ¦ vestra" inquit "munera vobis	*A* 5.863 ¦ 5.348
	certa manent, pueri, et palmam movet ordine nemo.	*A* 5.349
	et lux cum primum terris se crastina reddet,	*A* 8.170
	unus erit tantum ¦ in me exitiumque meorum,	*A* 5.814 ¦ 8.386 (excidiumque)
	dum paci medium se offert ¦ de corpore ¦ nostro.	*A* 7.536 ¦ 10.342 etc. ¦ 2.396 etc.
	iamque dies, nisi fallor, adest. ¦ secludite curas.	*A* 5.49 ¦ 1.562
	mecum erit iste labor, ¦ nec me sententia fallit:	*A* 4.115 ¦ 10.608 (te)
	unum pro multis dabitur caput." ¦ haec ita fatus	*A* 5.815 ¦ 10.594
	conticuit ¦ seramque dedit per membra quietem.	*A* 6.54 ¦ 8.30
Matt. 26:57, 27:2; Mark 14:46, 15:1; Luke 22:54, 23:1; John 18:12, 28	Oceanum interea surgens Aurora reliquit.	*A* 4.129 etc.
	iamque sacerdotes ¦ late loca questibus implent	*A* 8.281 ¦ *G* 4.515 (implet)
	cum populo patribus ¦ ferturque per agmina murmur.	*A* 8.679 (pat. pop.que) ¦ 12.239 (serpitque)
	quod genus hoc hominum? quaeve hunc tam barbara morem	*A* 1.539
	permittit patria? ¦ poenas cum sanguine poscunt	*A* 1.540 ¦ 2.72
	undique collecti ¦ et magno clamore secuntur	*A* 2.414 etc. ¦ 5.207 (morantur)
	insontem, ¦ saevitque animis ignobile vulgus.	*A* 2.84 ¦ 1.149
	Sol medium caeli conscenderat igneus orbem,	*A* 8.97
	cum subito ¦ acciri omnes, populusque patresque,	*A* 1.509 etc. ¦ 9.192
	exposcunt ¦ *farique iubent,* ¦ quo sanguine cretus	*A* 9.193 ¦ 11.240 (fari; iubet) ¦ 2.74 etc.
	quidve petat quidve ipse ferat. ¦ praeclara tuentis	*A* 10.150 ¦ 10.397
	facta viri mixtus dolor et ¦ stupor urguet inertis—	*A* 10.398 ¦ *G* 3.523
	nescia mens hominum—, ¦ certantque inludere capto.	*A* 10.501 ¦ 2.64
Matt. 27:27–49; Mark 15:16–36; Luke 23:26–45; John 19:16–18	tum vero ¦ raptis concurrunt undique telis.	*A* 4.571 etc. ¦ 7.520
	tollitur in caelum clamor cunctique ¦ repente	*A* 11.745 ¦ 12.462 etc.
	corripuere sacram effigiem manibusque cruentis	*A* 2.167
	ingentem quercum decisis undique ramis	*A* 11.5
	constituunt ¦ spirisque ligant ingentibus ¦ ipsum,	*A* 6.217 ¦ 2.217 ¦ 2.190 etc.
	tendebantque manus ¦ pedibus per mutua nexis—	*A* 6.314 ¦ 7.66
	triste ministerium—, ¦ sequitur quos cetera pubes,	*A* 6.223 ¦ 5.74
	ausi omnes inmane nefas ausoque potiti.	*A* 6.624
	ille autem inpavidus ¦ "quo vincula nectitis?" inquit,	*A* 10.717 ¦ *E* 6.23
	"tantane vos generis tenuit fiducia vestri?	*A* 1.132

mingling them with a prayer and he said:
“Listen, noble men,” he said, “and learn your hope!
None of you will leave without a gift,
and through the Father’s promises,” he said, “your gifts
remain secure, boys, and no one will alter your first place in the order.
When tomorrow’s light will return to earth,
there will only be one against me and the ruin of my followers
as long as a means of peace will offer itself from my flesh.
Unless I am mistaken, the day is already here. Chase away your worries.
This task will be mine, and my decision does not fail me.
A single head will be given for many”. After having spoken thus,
he fell silent and at last he let rest come to his limbs.
Meanwhile, Dawn rose left the Ocean.
The priests already filled the wide places with their sermons
when a murmur ran through the ranks of the people and the fathers.
What race of men was this, what barbaric land allowed
this behavior? They demanded punishment with blood,
gathering from all over and followed the innocent man
with loud shouting, the ignoble mob raged in their spirits.
The fiery sun had reached the middle of its orbit
when suddenly everyone, the people and the fathers, demanded that he
should be summoned and ordered him to reveal his blood-line,
what he wanted and would do. As they saw the famous deeds
of this man, pain mixed with senselessness assailed the wretched crowd.
—thoughtless human mind!—they competed in scorning the captured.
Then they came running from all directions with drawn weapons.
They raised their cry to the skies and suddenly everyone
seized the holy figure. With their bloody hands
they put up a large oak tree with cut branches,
tied him with huge twisted bands,
and stretched out his hands and pressed his feet together
—a terrible undertaking—and the other young men followed them.
All dared an atrocious sin and enjoyed what they dared.
But fearless he said: “Why do you fasten bonds?
Has so much confidence in your race gotten hold of you?

	post mihi non simili poena commissa luetis.”	*A* 1.136
	talia perstabat memorans fixusque manebat.	*A* 2.650
Matt. 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:44–45	Interea magno misceri murmure caelum	*A* 1.124 etc.
	incipit ¦ et rebus nox abstulit atra colorem	*A* 1.721 etc. ¦ 6.272
	impiaque aeternam timuerunt saecula noctem.	*G* 1.468
	terra tremit; fugere ferae et mortalia corda	*G* 1.330
	per gentes humilis stravit pavor: ¦ inde repente	*G* 1.131 ¦ *A* 8.238
	dat tellus gemitum et ¦ caelum tonat omne fragore.	*A* 9.709 ¦ 9.541
	extemplo ¦ commotae Erebi de sedibus imis	*A* 1.92 etc. ¦ *G* 4.471
	umbrae ibant tenues. ¦ tellus quoque et aequora ponti	*G* 4.472 ¦ 1.469
	signa dabant: ¦ sistunt amnes terraeque dehiscunt.	*G* 1.471 ¦ 1.479
	quin ipsae stupuere domus atque intima Leti	*G* 4.481
	Tartara ¦ et umbrosae penitus patuere cavernae.	*G* 4.482 ¦ *A* 8.242
	sol quoque et exoriens ¦—cuncti se scire fatentur—	*G* 1.438 ¦ *A* 11.344
	tum caput obscura nitidum ferrugine texit.	*G* 1.467 (cum)
	Diffugiunt comites et nocte *teguntur* opaca	*A* 4.123 (diffugient; tegentur)
	multaque dura suo tristi cum corde ¦ volutant.	*A* 8.522 ¦ 1.725 etc.
	quid faciant? ¦ haerent infixi pectore vultus	*A* 9.399 ¦ 4.4
	verbaque, nec placidam membris dat cura quietem.	*A* 4.5
	tum senior tales referebat pectore voces	*A* 5.409
	multa putans: ¦ “ubi nunc nobis deus ille magister?	*A* 6.332 ¦ 5.391
	quem sequimur? quove ire iubes? ubi ponere sedes?	*A* 3.88
	o dolor atque decus, ¦ tantarum gloria rerum!	*A* 10.507 ¦ 3.232
	iam iam nulla mora est: ¦ et nos rape in omnia tecum,	*A* 2.701 ¦ 2.675
	oramus, ¦ teque aspectu ne subtrahe nostro.”	*A* 1.525 ¦ 6.465
Matt. 28:2–20; Mark 16:4–18; 24:2–50; John 20:1–29	Hos inter motus ¦ media inter talia verba	*A* 11.225 ¦ *A* 12.318
	tertia lux gelidam caelo dimoverat umbram:	*A* 11.210
	iamque pedem referens ¦ superas veniebat ad auras,	*G* 4.485 ¦ 4.486
	cum subito ¦ ante oculos ¦ ingenti mole sepulchrum,	*A* 1.509 ¦ 1.114 ¦ 6.232
	corpus ubi exanime positum, ¦—nec claustra nec ipsi	*A* 11.30 ¦ 2.491
	custodes sufferre valent—¦ avulsaque saxis	*A* 2.492 ¦ 2.608
	saxa *vident*, ¦ laxis laterum compagibus ¦ artis.	*A* 2.609 (vides) ¦ 1.122 ¦ 1.293
	fit sonus: ingenti concussa est pondere tellus.	*A* 9.752
	horror ubique animo, simul ipsa silentia terrent.	*A* 2.755
	Ecce autem primi ¦ volucrum sub culmine cantus:	*A* 6.255 ¦ 8.456
	ingreditur linquens antrum, ¦ spoliisque superbus	*A* 6.157 ¦ 8.202
	ibat ovans, ¦ pulsuque pedum tremit excita tellus,	*A* 6.589 ¦ 12.445
	vulneraque illa gerens ¦ foribus sese intulit altis.	*A* 2.278 ¦ 11.36

Later you will atone your deeds with a punishment unlike mine."
Uttering such words he stood still and remained motionless.
Meanwhile, the sky began to mingle with a great noise
and the black night removed color from things
and the impious world feared eternal night.
The earth trembled, the wild animals took flight and mortal hearts
of the people were laid low by a humble fear. Then suddenly
earth groaned and all of heaven sounded with thunder.
Suddenly, from the nether reach of Erebos,
incorporeal shadows came up. And earth and the waters of the sea
gave signals: the rivers stopped and the ground gaped open.
The very homes and the deepest part of Death's Tartarus were stunned
and the innermost shady caverns were wide open.
Likewise the sun, although it was rising—all testified that they knew—
concealed its shining head in dark mist.
The followers fled and were covered in dark night
while they pondered over the many dreadful things in their mournful heart.
What were they to do? His guise was carved into their breast
as was his words, and worries kept all ease and rest far from their bodies
Then the older man among them, contemplating many things in his heart
uttered the words: "Where is our God and teacher now?
Who shall we follow? Where do you command us to go? where to settle down?
Oh, grief and pride, glory of great deeds!
Now there is no delay; take us with you wherever you go!
We beg of you: do not disappear from our sight!"
In the midst of this turmoil, as such words were spoken,
a third dawn drove the cold shadow from heaven.
It was already on its way back and had come to the higher air
when suddenly before their eyes they saw the heavy mass of the grave
in which the lifeless body had been placed—even the guards themselves
were unable to move the seal—they saw that stones were removed
from stones, the walls were dissolved in the joints.
There was a sound, and earth was shaken under the huge weight.
Everywhere horror struck the spirit, even silence was terrifying.
Behold! At the first singing of the birds under the sky,
he left the cave, stepped out and walked onwards, proud of his prey,
rejoicing, and the earth shook at his steps.
Wearing those wounds he appeared at the high doors.

	atque hic ingentem comitum adfluxisse novorum	*A* 2.796
	invenit admirans numerum ¦ cunctisque repente	*A* 2.797 (invenio) ¦ 1.594
	inprovisus ait: “coram, quem quaeritis, adsum.	*A* 1.595
	vicit iter durum pietas ¦ et ¦ vivida virtus.	*A* 6.688 ¦ 1.57 etc. ¦ 5.754
	praecipites vigilate, viri; ¦ timor omnis abesto.	*A* 4.573 ¦ 11.14
	hi nostri reditus expectatique triumphi,	*A* 11.54
	haec mea magna fides. ¦ O terque quaterque beati,	*A* 11.55 ¦ 1.94
	quae vobis, quae digna, viri, pro laudibus istis	*A* 9.252
	praemia posse rear solvi, ¦ quae dona parari?	*A* 9.253 ¦ *E* 6.79
	accipite ergo animis: ¦ quae vos a stirpe parentum	*A* 3.250 ¦ 3.94
	prima tulit tellus, eadem vos ubere laeto	*A* 3.95
	accipiet. ¦ revocate animum maestumque timorem	*A* 3.96 ¦ 1.202
	mittite ¦ et vosmet rebus servate secundis.	*A* 1.203 ¦ 1.207
	quod superest, laeti bene gestis *ordine* rebus	*A* 9.157 (corpora)
	pacem *orate* manu, ¦ pacem laudate sedentes	*A* 10.80 (orare) ¦ 11.460
	magnanimi; ¦ pacis solum inviolabile pignus.”	*A* 6.649 etc. ¦ 11.363
	et simul his dictis faciem *ostendebat* et ¦ ora,	*A* 5.357 (ostentabat) ¦ 2.211 etc.
	ora manusque ambas populataque ¦ pectora ferro:	*A* 6.496 ¦ 1.355
	immiscentque manus manibus ¦ gaudentque tuentes.	*A* 5.429 ¦ 5.575
	nec vidisse semel satis est: iuvat usque morari	*A* 6.487
	et conferre gradum ¦ et dextrae coniungere dextram.	*A* 6.488 ¦ 8.164
Mark 16:19; Luke 24:51	His demum exactis ¦ spirantes dimovet auras:	*A* 6.637 ¦ 9.645
	aëra per tenerum ¦ caeloque invectus aperto	*A* 9.699 ¦ 1.155
	mortales visus medio in sermone reliquit:	*A* 4.277
	[Infert se saeptus nebula—mirabile dictu—]	*A* 1.439
	atque illum ¦ solio stellantis regia caeli	*A* 1.227 ¦ 7.210
	accipit ¦ aeternumque tenet per saecula nomen.	*A* 7.211 ¦ 6.235
	ex illo celebratus honos, laetique minores	*A* 8.268
	servavere diem ¦ tot iam labentibus annis.	*A* 8.269 ¦ 2.14
	I decus, i, nostrum, ¦ tantarum gloria rerum,	*A* 6.546 ¦ 4.232 etc.
	[semper honos nomenque tuum laudesque manebunt]	*A* 1.609
	et nos et tua dexter adi pede sacra secundo	*A* 8.302
	annua, quae differre nefas. celebrate faventes	*A* 8.173
	hunc, socii, morem sacrorum, hunc ipse teneto,	*A* 3.408
	o dulcis coniunx, ¦ et si pietate meremur,	*A* 2.777 ¦ 2.690
	hac casti maneant in religione nepotes.	*A* 3.409

Here he found that a huge number of new followers had gathered.
He wondered at their number and suddenly,
without warning, he said: “I, the one you are seeking, stand before you.
Piety and living virtue overcame the difficult road.
Be ready and awake, men, let all fear disappear.
This is my return and awaited triumph
this is my great testimony. O three and four times blessed men:
what worthy rewards for this praise,
what gifts should I deem it fit to give you in return?
So take this to your hearts! The earth that bore you
from your fathers’ stock will happily receive you again in its
fertile bosom. Summon your spirit, let go of the gloomy fear
and save your strength for the good days to come.
Moreover, with things done in due order,
pray for peace joyfully with your hand, praise the peace seated and
magnanimous! The only inviolable guarantee for peace.”
And while he said these words, he showed his countenance and his face;
the face, both of his hands and the chest devastated by iron.
They joined hands and rejoiced at the sight.
It was not enough to behold him once, but they took delight in delaying
and linger in their steps and place hand in hand.
When these things had been fulfilled at last, he cleaved the winds,
traveled through the light air and in the open sky,
684a and left the gaze of mortals in the middle of his speech.
684b [He moved fenced by a cloud—marvelous to relate—
And the royal quarters in starry heaven received him with a throne
and will eternally keep his name through the ages.
From this time his honor has been celebrated and younger generations
have delighted in maintaining the day already for so many years now.
689a Go forward, our pride! Go forward, glory of great deeds,
689b [—your honor, name and praise will always remain—]
come to us and to your sacred annual rites with auspicious steps,
which must not be postponed. Comrades, celebrate,
honoring this sacred custom! You, my sweet husband,
maintain it! And, if we deserve it through our devotion,
our descendants will also remain chaste in this sacred worship.

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